

# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR

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## Newer variety of zinc enriched rice

*Should be put to extensive cultivation quickly*

**O**UR scientists have come up with yet another more productive variety of zinc enriched rice. We compliment the team of scientists who have contributed to the bio fortification process.

Compared to its earlier types, the new variety, labelled as Brrri dhan-64, not only has higher content of zinc, but has yield potential of over 6 metric tons per hectare, 25 percent higher than its immediate predecessors. Moreover, apart from high zinc and more yield factors, the breed is also capable of fighting diarrhoea and pneumonia like its previous version. What is notable about this variety is that it will not be more expensive nor will it require special techniques in terms of producing its seeds.

However, the National Seed Board will finalise the approval of Brrri dhan-64's cultivation feasibility assessment later this week. We believe its assessment over the wide scale cultivation of this variety will be positive, and steps will be taken to put it into wide scale production quickly.

Given the facts of its high zinc value and yield potential we must ensure that it enters cultivation extensively. In a country like ours its entry into immediate production is an imperative as currently over 40 percent children under five are stunted due to lack of nutrition and an estimated 44 percent children of the same age group risks zinc deficiency. This variety has all the ingredients to cater to the nutrition needs of a vast number of children.