

## Bangladesh could double crop production by 2030 with help of GM technology, experts say

USAID and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) hosted [a virtual] event to learn from stakeholders about challenges, prospects, and recommendations for agricultural research and biotechnology.

The experts also suggested making the private sector skilled enough for rapid commercialisation of biotech products in agriculture.

Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council member director (crops) Dr Md Aziz Zilani Chowdhury said the country's food production should be increased by 100 per cent within 2030 to achieve an SDG.

"In the process, we're focusing on both high yielding and a sustainable cropping system," he said. Dr Chowdhury said biotech could be a great solution to achieving such a goal, putting emphasis on high-value crop production to benefit farmers.

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Meanwhile, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI) chief scientific officer Yousuf Akhond said they have recently inserted Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis* bacteria) gene into BARI-10 and 11 brinjal varieties.

With the process, a total of nine brinjal varieties have so far become Bt-engineered, he added.

Environment ministry has so far approved four Bt brinjal varieties, Mr Akhond mentioned.

Of the two latest varieties, BARI-11 is also known as 'Chyaga' in Jashore region.

BARI officials said seven crops, including Bt brinjal, golden rice, salt-tolerant rice, blight-resistant potato, blast-tolerant wheat, another disease-tolerant tomato and cotton have so far been genetically engineered here.

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