

Rice genome maps may help the poor

AP, Washington

New maps of the rice genome will make it easier for plant breeders to develop hardy, high-yielding versions of a variety of crops without the use of genetic engineering, scientists say.

The genetic blueprint of rice is similar to the genomes for corn, wheat and other plants descended from wild grasses. Plant geneticists say the rice map will make it much quicker to identify genetic traits and create new versions of crops by the old-fashioned method of cross breeding.

"The future of agriculture will be navigated using the rice genome map," said Steve Briggs, president of Syngenta AG's Torrey Mesa Research Institute.

Syngenta and a China-based group of researchers published in Science magazine Thursday draft maps of the genomes of separate subspecies of rice. A more complete map of the rice genome is nearing completion by an international consortium of scientists.

Rice is a staple for half the world's population, and the decoding of its genes is expected to help alleviate world hunger by making it easier for scientists to come up with varieties that are more nutritious and have higher yields.

BCIC International Tender Notice

বিসিআইসি'র পণ্য শিল্পায়নে জাতীয় অগ্রগতির প্রয়োজন

Managing Director, Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd., Chhatak, Sunamganj hereby invites sealed quotation on C&F(C) Chittagong by sea & Benapole by road basis for supply of 10 MT High Grade Castable against Tender Enquiry No. CCCL/PD/F/22/2001-2002 dt. 19-03-2002. The tenders accompanied with 1% (one per cent) earnest money/bid bond also money receipt evidencing purchase of tender documents will be received up to 10-00 AM on 20-05-2002, and be opened immediately thereafter the same day both the places i.e. in Purchase Division, BCIC Head Office, Dhaka & at Purchase Deptt., Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd. On payment of Tk. 400.00 in cash (non-refundable) the tender documents will be available from the office of the (1) The Controller of Accounts, BCIC Head Office, 30-31, Dilkusha C.A., Dhaka, (2) BCIC Branch Office, 6, Agrabad C.A., Chittagong and (3) Chhatak Cement Co. Ltd. except the opening day of the tender. The management reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereto.

BCIC-700-28/3/2002
DFP-7748-31/3/02
G-867Md. Harun Al Rashid
Dy. Manager (Purchase)
for Managing Director.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer, RHD
Chittagong Zone, Chittagong
Pre-Qualification Notice for RHD Contractors
2002 Annual Term Contracts for Routine Highway Maintenance Works

Roads and Highways Dept of Ministry of Communication is eager to implement a programme of routine maintenance works to cover the main roads of Bangladesh, through pre-qualified contractors of RHD.

Expressions of interest are sought in their own letter pad in sealed cover from qualified contractors enlisted as class "A" general or class "B" general with RHD for the pilot 'Annual Term Contracts' for maintenance of the following roads within the Chittagong Zone:

1. Chittagong to Kapta Road (approx 38 km).

2. Hathazari to Fakirkhali Road (approx 34 km).

These works are of a small nature and will be awarded for 12 months. The type of works lend themselves to contractors organised and proficient in labour intensive methods working in small units to high standard and under their own professional supervision. The contractor will be expected to respond promptly on a needs basis.

The works will be mainly though not exclusively:

- Small pavement repairs including crack sealing and patching of potholes, depressions and broken edge.
- Minor bridge repair works.
- Cleaning and repair of culverts and other drainage structures including construction of earthen drain.
- Maintaining shoulders and verges with earth works and vegetation control. Contractors who have a recognised establishment within the Chittagong Circle and who are interested in being considered for the above works should submit a statement of capability with their company profile. Other important information in support of the pre-qualification should include such information as:
- Past and present contracts including works of a similar nature.
- CV's of key professional managerial and supervisory staff.
- Plant & equipment ownership.
- Company financial statement including banker's reference.
- References from past and present employers.

Contractors will be short-listed by the quality of their expression of interest. Marks available will be divided equally amongst the five categories above. The decision of the authority in this respect will be final & conclusive.

All proposals shall be received in sealed cover by the undermentioned officer on behalf of the undersigned on or before 15th April, 2002, 12 Noon.

Abed Uddin Ahmed
Additional Chief Engineer, RHD (c.c.)
Chittagong Zone, Chittagong
Phone: 031-712811.

This will be the first genetic mapping project "to yield tangible results for humankind from the standpoints of food security and combating malnutrition," the directors of two major international crop research centers wrote in a Science article accompanying the genome reports.

Stephen Goff, leader of the Syngenta team, said the variety it studied, known as japonica, should reveal the gene that causes production of vitamin A. That information could speed the development of rice varieties that have higher levels of the nutrient. Vitamin A deficiency is a major cause of blindness in Asia.

But the rice genome also is important because of the road map it provides for other crops with much more complex genomes, such as corn and wheat. Genes for traits such as resistance to heat or disease appear at similar locations in the genomes of all the related crops.

Conventional plant breeding is a laborious process, sometimes requiring a decade or more of crossing and back-crossing plants to ensure that the resulting crop variety has the best traits possible. Scientists say knowledge of the rice genome will enable them to

find the genetic traits they want in seed banks and then to track those traits through the new plant varieties they're developing.

"It takes what is usually a 12 to 15-year activity to something that takes three or four years. That's pretty major," said Jeffrey Bennett, a biologist at Purdue University.

By using conventional breeding methods, crop developers avoid the hassle of getting government approval to test and commercialise genetically engineered crops. Biotech crops have met strong consumer resistance in Europe, and some U.S. food companies have shied from using them.

Syngenta plans to start field testing this summer a variety of corn that was developed using the rice data to be more resistant to cold, damp weather in the spring.

"Conventional plant breeding is going to be the major benefactor of the genomics era," said Benjamin Burr, a plant geneticist at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York.

The genome mapping suggests rice may have more genes than humans. The genome of the indica type studied by the Chinese group is believed to contain 45,000 to 56,000 genes, compared to 30,000 to 40,000 for humans. The japonica subspecies is believed to have 42,000 to 63,000.

From dying coral reefs to later marine and endangered male painted turtles, global warming has started to affect plant and animal life across the planet, scientists said Wednesday.

The world's mean temperature increased by around 0.6 degrees

Celsius in the 20th century -- most of the rise came in the last 30 years -- and its impact is already being felt by flora and fauna from the equator to the poles.

Some species are doomed as they battle ever-rising temperatures in an increasingly crowded planet that offers fewer escape routes, according to scientists writing in the journal Nature.

Temperature has increased by no more than 0.6 degrees and already the signs are very obvious," said geobotanist Gian-Reto Walther from the University of Hanover in Germany, who collated the research from across the branches of the natural sciences.

The study's conclusions highlight the seriousness of global climate change by showing parallel trends in plants, birds, animals and fish.

"This is a major concern,"

Walther told Reuters, adding extinction for some species was inevitable.

"The big difference between now and previous periods of climate change, like the Ice Age, is that seven billion people live on Earth now and many migration corridors for species are blocked,"

Walther said.

One of the most dramatic barometers of climate change has been the world's coral reefs, which have been devastated by 'coral bleaching' -- a direct result of warmer ocean water.

In the worst case of mass bleaching, in 1998, an estimated 16 percent of the world's reef-building coral died, Nature said.

Meanwhile in Europe, trees are starting to show their autumn colour between 0.3 and 1.6 days later per decade, while some migrating birds are changing their travel plans.



People stroll through flower beds of colorful tulips in the Tokyo's Hibiya Park yesterday. Unusually warm weather hit the Japanese archipelago as a migratory anticyclone prevailed over the country, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

Global warming hits species all over world

REUTERS, London

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Yocum is a former scientific adviser to the FDA who joined Wolfe's call for a ban.

Unlike other drugs that can clear the body shortly after patients swallow a dose, Arava can takes months to dissipate. Yocum said that means there is not much doctors can do if a patient shows signs of trouble.

Yet some insurance companies pay only for Arava, not more expensive newer therapies that do not come with the same risks, Yocum complained.

"I do not believe that the general rheumatologist understands or has any knowledge about these serious and potentially life-threatening complications," he said.

Rheumatoid arthritis affects about 2 million Americans, the vast majority of them women.

Laughter not the best medicine for asthma kids

REUTERS, Sydney

Laughter is not always the best medicine -- at least not for children with asthma.

A study by medical researchers in Australia of more than 500 children with asthma found that in two thirds of the cases attacks were brought on by laughing fits, tickling or excitement.

Mirth as a trigger for breathing difficulties was more prevalent than exercise or smog. Richard Henry, a professor of pediatrics at the University of New South Wales, said on Thursday.

But Henry, who works at the Sydney Children's Hospital, said the study also found that where laughter triggered asthma, it was invariably because the medical condition was poorly controlled.

"It's definitely not a message saying children with asthma have to go around being giddy, the message is those children need to have their asthma more effectively controlled," Henry told Reuters.

Arthritis drug may cause liver damage

AP, Washington

A prescription drug for rheumatoid arthritis has been linked to dozens of serious liver injuries and 12 deaths and should be banned, a consumer advocacy group told the government Thursday.

Arava began selling in 1998 as a competitor to the gold-standard treatment for rheumatoid arthritis, called methotrexate. When the Food and Drug Administration approved Arava, the agency noted Arava worked no better than the older drug, but said patients needed some different options.

Since then, the FDA has received at least 130 reports of severe liver toxicity linked to Arava use, including 56 hospitalizations and 12 deaths, said Dr. Sidney Wolfe of the consumer advocacy group Public Citizen.

Two of the deaths were people in their 20s.

Since Arava and methotrexate work equally well, and methotrexate also bears a warning about possible liver damage, Wolfe compared the two. The FDA has six times more reports of liver damage among Arava users than methotrexate users - even though thousands more people use methotrexate, he said.

Citing similar reactions abroad, the European Union last year warned patients and doctors about Arava's toxicity, Wolfe said. He wants the FDA to go further and ban Arava's sales.

The FDA said it would carefully consider Wolfe's petition.

A spokeswoman for Arava manufacturer Aventis Pharma said she had not seen the petition and declined comment about liver damage. Lise Geduldig said Arava was "an important therapeutic option" taken by 200,000 people.

The American College of Rheumatology last summer warned doctors to take special care in prescribing Arava, by repeatedly testing patients' livers for signs of harm.

But it is impossible to predict which patients will be at risk, said Dr. David Yocum of Arizona Health Sciences Center, who recently had an Arava patient die.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Govt. Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
LGED Bhaban, Tangail

Memo No. LGED/EE/RDP-14(TIDP-II)/TANG/2002/1589 Dated: 21.03.2002

Tender Notice

No. 29/2001-2002

Sealed tenders are hereby invited for 02 (two) Road Contract under Rural Development Project-14: Infrastructure; Tangail District Phase-II (TIDP-II), by the undersigned from pre-qualified contractors/firms of Tangail Infrastructure Development Project-II (TIDP-II) and also from the pre-qualified contractors/firms of all other LGED's donor funded projects (class equivalent to the requirement of column 8 of SI No 7 of this Notice) for the execution during the financial year 2001-2002. The tender can be purchased from the office of the Divisional Commissioner, Dhaka, Project Director, RDP-14, LGED Bhaban, Dhaka-1207, Deputy Commissioner, Tangail, Executive Engineer, LGED, Tangail & Gazipur and Upazila Engineer, LGED, Sakhipur & Mirzapur, Dist: Tangail on or before 23rd April, 2002 during office hours. The tender documents can be submitted to the abovementioned offices on or before 24th April 2002 upto 1:00 PM and will be opened on 24th April, 2002 at 2:00 PM. This notice is short. Detailed information may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

DFP-7893-1/4/02
G-885

Abdur Razzaque
Executive Engineer

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer (R&H)
Dhaka Road Division, Banani, Dhaka

Stoppage Notice

It is notified for information of all concerned that, receiving tender against Tender Notice No. 46/RDD/2001-2002 invited vide this Office Memo No. 1997 (30) dt. 19-3-2002 is stopped under unavoidable circumstance. All will be informed later on through notification.

Manzur Ahmed Bhuiyan
Executive Engineer (R&H)
Dhaka Road Division
Banani, Dhaka.

Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, B'baria

Notice Inviting Tender (3rd Call)

1. Tender Notice : 20/EE, RHD, Road Division, B'baria-2001-2002.
No
2. Time of work : Approach road of Araihazar-Banchharampur-Muradnagar road under Road Division, B'baria during the year 2001-2002.
3. Estimated costs : Tk. 24,34,242/-
4. Earnest money : Tk. 48,685/- in BD/Pay Order from any scheduled bank to be deposited in favour of the undersigned.
5. Name of offices in which the tender documents will be available for purchase : The Divisional Commissioner, Chittagong/the Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Division, Comilla/Chandpur/Planning & Design Divn, Comilla/Planning Div-1 (P&D) Dhaka & SDE's Road Sub-Division, B'baria/Banchharampur office under Road Division, B'baria all offices of the undersigned.
6. Name of offices in which the tender will be received : The Addl. Chief Engineer, RHD, Comilla Zone, Comilla/the Divisional Commissioner, Ctg./the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Road Circle, Comilla/the Superintending Engineer, RHD, Procurement & Monitoring Circle, Dhaka and office of the undersigned.
7. Time allowed : 25(twenty-five) days from the date of issue of work order.
8. Last date of selling of tender : 15-4-2002 during office hours.
9. Last date & time of receipt of tender : Up to 12.30 PM on 16-4-2002.
10. Last date & time of opening of the tender : At 11.00 AM on 21-4-2002.
11. Date of lottery : At 12.00 Noon on 22-4-2002.
12. Eligibility of contractor : "A" to "D" general category of RHD contractor.
13. Chargeable head : 266-Dev.

DFP-7628-30/3/02
G-860Mahiuddin Ahmed
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, B'baria

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Public Health Engineering
Comilla Division, Comilla

Short Re-Tender Notice (2nd Call)

Aর্থস