

GM Food should not be allowed before test

Food minister tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Genetically modified food can ensure adequate food supply in an overpopulated country like Bangladesh, but the government should be aware that it might be harmful to health of consumers, farmers and environment.

Speakers said this at a seminar on 'G M Food and Consumers' Right' yesterday at the CIRDAP auditorium. Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) organised the seminar.

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman was present as chief guest while CAB Treasurer Khalilur Rahman Sajal presented the key-note paper.

They stressed on more research and study before marketing of genetically modified food in the country.

In his keynote paper Sajal said hybrid seeds have been driving out local seeds from the market what can make a disaster in agriculture sector in long run. The farmers have to spend more on pesticide, fertiliser and labour when they use the hybrid seeds, he said. The farmers would be hostage to the foreign seed companies as the hybrid seeds do not have proper reproduction capacity, he added.

He said GM food should not be used as protein as it can be harmful to the human health.

Noman in his speech said before doing any research on foreign stuff like genetically modified food should not be allowed in the country as it has become already controversial.

"With the ensuring of food security, we have to be careful so that our consumers do not take something else in the name of nutrition," the

food minister said.

Farida Akhter of Ubinig said the multinational companies are destroying local resources by marketing the hybrid seeds in the country. She urged the government to take step against it.

CAB General Secretary Kazi Faruk gave address of welcome with Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury in the chair. Representatives from different government and non-government organisations attended the seminar.

30 shanties gutted in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 shanties were gutted leaving over 150 people homeless in a fire at a slum near Railway Hospital at Pahartali thana in the port city yesterday.

The fire that originated from an earthen oven at about 12.30 pm spread fast to engulf the entire area and damaged property worth about TK 20 lakh, Firebrigade sources said.

Five units of fire service rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control at 2.00 pm.

However, no casualty was reported.