



PHOTO: STAR
Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina speaks at a press conference at the party's Dhanmondi office yesterday.

Govts should prioritise investments in agri research

IRRI official tells *The Daily Star*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the dwindling international support for agricultural research and training, governments of the agrarian economies require to prioritise their investments to agricultural research in accordance to the importance of the farming on their respective economies.

This was stated by Dr William G Padolina, deputy director general of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), while talking to *The Daily Star* yesterday on the sideline of the concluding session of a three-day meeting of the Rice-Wheat Consortium for the Indo-Gangetic Plains (RWC) in the city.

RWC is a partnership among the national agricultural research

systems of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. The consortium was established in 1994.

"We provide technologies for improving productivity and imparting training for capacity building. But the governments of both rich and poor countries will find their investments worthy if they inject more fund to agricultural research and development," he said.

Asked about fund constraint now being faced by international research centres, Padolina said increased agricultural productivity could solve the problem partly but more investment in research is a must.

He said through RWC efforts, farmers in South Asia have begun using practices that save water, fuel and other inputs facilitating timely planting, reducing tillage needs and diversifying their cropping pattern.

The Dhaka meeting of RWC was held at a time when two of the world's leading agricultural research centres the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) announced a new IRRI-CIMMYT alliance aimed at boosting international efforts to fight poverty and strengthen food security in the developing world.

Earlier inaugurating the meeting on February 6, Agriculture Minister MK Anwar stressed the need for intensifying the research and extension activities on the low cost technologies for increasing productivity of rice-wheat cropping pattern to improve the livelihood of about 130 million people in South Asia, the home of half of the world's poor and one third of the world's undernourished people.

Some 115 rice and wheat specialists, policymakers, planners and representatives from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan and also from research centres including IRRI, CIMMYT, ICRISAT, CIP and AVRDC took part in the meeting.

Dr Nurul Alam, executive chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC), and Dr Craig Meisner, CIMMYT representative to Bangladesh, spoke at the concluding session.

The participants reviewed in details the success and progress of the consortium activities achieved during the last year and adopted some recommendations.

The meeting also stressed the need for strengthening regional cooperation in the field of research.

Khulna journos submit memo to PM today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Journalists in Khulna will submit memorandums to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and State Minister for Home Lutuzzaman Babar today through deputy commissioner demanding immediate arrest of the culprits responsible for the Saturday's bomb attacks on the Khulna Press Club premises.

They will also stage sit-in tomorrow protesting the bomb attack.

Meanwhile, there has been no headway in the investigation of bomb attack case filed with Khulna thana on Sunday. The investigation officer is yet to unearth any clue to bomb attack. Eight people were shown arrested in the case on Monday.

The arrestees are Habibur Rahman, Khokon, Elias, Anwar, Gada Yunus, Delwar, Golam Rasul and Shonai Khan.

Condition of *Dainik Sangram* reporter Beluddin is still critical, family sources said.

Six were killed a day last month

MMC report on women's rights violations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Six women were killed and 14 others tortured a day last month, according to a report of Mass-line Media Centre (MMC).

As many as 391 incidents of violations of women's rights took place during the period, but only 163 cases were registered with the police and 96 people were arrested in this connection, the report said.

Also, a total of 80 children were killed in violence and 90 others died in accidents in January, according to the another report by MMC.

Land dispute, family feud, discrimination against girl children and dowry led to the killing in most cases, the report said.

Both the reports were prepared

on the basis of reports published in 154 newspapers, including 12 national dailies.

According to the report on women rights violations, three women were raped a day and the Rajshahi division saw the highest number of rape victims, 23, in January.

The number of women killed over dowry is 29.

Twelve women fell victim to acid attacks across the country but only six cases were lodged and one person was arrested in this connection.

According to the report on child rights violations, a total of 52 children fell victim to rape and other forms of sexual harassment and five of them were killed after rape.