



PHOTO: STAR  
Sylhet Bibhagh Unnayan Sangram Parishad stages a demonstration with black flags at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting the Tengratila blowout.

# Use biotech properly for economic development

## Minister tells seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk yesterday called for proper application of biotechnology to bring about economic development.

"But we must resist temptation to apply extremely sophisticated biotechnology that may lead to moral and social hazards," he said at a seminar on 'Biotechnology: Research and Practice in Bangladesh' organised by the Brac University at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

There are many areas where biotechnology can be applied to achieve immense economic benefits, the minister said, adding that around 10,000 tons of baker's yeast can be produced annually by applying conventional techniques of biotechnology, which can earn a handsome amount of foreign exchange after meeting local demand.

Bangladesh has to exploit the potentials of biotechnology as it faces two major challenges of ensuring food security for a growing population and halving poverty by 2015, said State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

"We have no other alternatives but to apply biotechnology to increase food production," he said. "We can achieve sustained food security and reduce poverty through its environment-friendly application."

But the sustainable and proper application of biotechnology is not possible without safety regulations, Alamgir said, adding that steps have been taken to formulate a national biotechnology policy.

The National Institute of Biotechnology will also be set up soon for research and proper use of biotechnology, he said.

Prof. Jamilur Reza Choudhury, vice-chancellor of Brac University, said it is imperative to make use of interests of the non-resident Bangladeshis experts to advance this technology in the country.

The pharmaceutical industry in the country has a high demand for biotech

experts, he said, adding that the Brac University is going to introduce graduate programmes in this field, particularly in bioinformatics.

Prof Nayyum Choudhury, former chairman of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, said that the country lacks coordinated research activities in biotechnology at the national level.

On the other hand, research at the

individual or institutional level suffers from inadequate funds, he said while speaking at a technical session, chaired by Prof Mustafizur Rahman.

Biotech experts Prof AAZ Ahmad, Prof Hasina Khan, Prof Jeba I Seraj, Prof M Imdadul Hoque and Prof Rakha Hari Sarker also spoke.



## Jahanara Imam's 11th anniversary of death today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The 11th death anniversary of 'Shaheed Janani' Jahanara Imam will be observed today.

Known as iconic Shaheed Janani, martyr's mother, she spearheaded the movement for bringing the collaborators of the 1971 liberation war to justice, and banning communal politics in the country.

Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Chhatra Union and Gonomukti and Jatiya Sampad Rakkha Sommlito Andolon have taken elaborate programmes to observe the day.

Jahanara Imam, author of 'Ekatturer Dinguli' (Days of '71), insisted that the people responsible for war crimes against the people of Bangladesh in 1971 be tried. In 1992, she helped organise the Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee.

Ghatok-Dalal Nirmul Committee set up mock trials known as Gonoadalot (Court of the people) and sentenced war criminals there.

Jahanara Imam and 24 other intellectuals were charged with treason for staging the mock trial.