

## **Agric. Minister Takes a Keen Interest in DU Biotech Research Work on Rice and Jute**

The Hon'ble Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury was the Chief Guest at a presentation ceremony on stress tolerant rice and jute cultivars by two eminent scholars at Dhaka University, Professor Haseena Khan and Professor Zeba Seraj held at the auditorium of the Centre of Excellence, Dhaka University. The Hall was packed to capacity including those from electronic media listening to the professors who are well known for their work both inside and outside Bangladesh. Backed by adequate scientific data and using marker assisted selection method, Professor Seraj spoke of her research group working on salt tolerance of HYV rice. She mentioned that her breeding population is now at the advanced stage of selection in saline soil of Satkhria. Prof. Haseena presented her data on the cold tolerance capacity of the various jute varieties available at the Gene Bank at Bangladesh Jute Research Institute. She also used marker assisted selection technique to select the cold tolerant jute varieties.

While expressing satisfaction at the quality of research work at DU, the Minister advised the scientists not to be self-complacent but extend the horizon of their research activity covering other crops such as stress tolerant maize, drought tolerant rice, more salt tolerant rice cultivars so that rice seedlings can grow in a cup of salts. The Minister assured the scientists that she would be looking into the difficulties faced by scientists to carry out their research work and redress their grievances. She also assured the audience that she would contact eminent NRB scientists such as Professor Maqsd Alam of a Hawaiian University seeking his cooperation in jute genome project.