

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. AMBASSADOR DAN MOZENA VISITS USAID SEED PROJECT IN SATKHIRA

SATKHIRA, FEBRUARY 11 – U.S. Ambassador Dan Mozena visited the Sustainable Rice Seed Production project funded by the U.S. Government’s premier development agency United States Agency for International Development (USAID) today, February 11. Currently Ambassador Mozena is travelling in Jessore-Khulna region. This USG funded Project currently operates in 20 southern districts covering all 124 Upazilas. The U.S. government through USAID/Bangladesh promotes new high-yielding and stress tolerant (Saline, draught, flood resistant) rice varieties to ensure food security under both normal and adverse climatic conditions such as flood, drought and salinity.

During the visit, Ambassador Mozena and his delegation visited the farmers’ fields to see the performance of the rice varieties being promoted through the project. They also interacted with a large number of farmers who either cultivated the high yielding draught and saline tolerant varieties during the previous seasons or are doing the same during the current *boro* season. He met local seed entrepreneurs who promote these varieties using a sustainable business model. USAID through this sustainable rice seed production project has increased awareness among the farmers and has already covered more than 0.5 million ha rice area with the new varieties benefitting more than 1 million farm families.

The project is being implemented by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) with a large number of national partners from public and private sectors such as Ministry of Agriculture, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Cooperation, DAE, Research institutions and universities, NGOs, private seed companies and small and medium seed entrepreneurs.

In the morning, Ambassador Mozena met with farmers in the Godkhali flower farms in Jhikorgachha, Jessore, talked to the flower farmers and learnt how they have worked hard and turned this into a profitable industry in Bangladesh.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, has provided over \$6 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2012 alone, USAID provided more than \$200 million to improve the lives of people in Bangladesh. USAID supports programs in Bangladesh that: promote democratic

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institutions and practices, expand food security and economic opportunity, improve health and education services, and increase resiliency to climate change through adaptation and low carbon development.

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