

## Padi variety IS22 being developed to be flood-resilient

By Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan - March 11, 2022 @ 6:40pm



The flood-resilient padi variety will be named IS22. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Nuclear Agency (MNA) is currently developing a new flood-resilient padi variety that will be named IS22.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob on Wednesday had asked the agency to study ways to develop padi varieties that can withstand floods.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba confirmed that the research was already underway to ensure farmers did not incur losses due to uncertainties in climate and weather extremes.

"The Malaysian Nuclear Agency has been proactively finding solutions through nuclear technology and has taken necessary actions in regard to climate change," he said in a statement today.

The development of the IS22 padi variety, he said, was a collaborative effort between Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi Mara, with technical assistance from the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Japan Atomic Energy Agency under the Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia framework.

The MNA also shared several other research projects that are ongoing, in parallel with the development of the IS22 padi variety.

These include a doctoral research project by an officer to obtain a submerged padi variety by cross-breeding the IS21 padi variety with an early maturing and flood-resilient padi variety.

The agency is also conducting research on drought-resistant padi varieties this year by inducing mutation in a traditional fragrant black rice variety using the ion beam acquired from Quantum and Radiological Science and Technology (QST).

However, the research could take a few years and requires funding before a potent rice variety can be developed for farmers to use.

On Jan 5, Deputy Agriculture and Food Industry Minister I Datuk Seri Ahmad Hamzah said the country's agrofood sector lost close to RM67.72 million due to the floods that inundated most parts of the Peninsular last December.