

Scientists call to curb crop biofuels ahead of COP30

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Dhaka: Nearly 100 scientists have urged world leaders to curb the expansion of biofuels, warning that the fuels, often promoted as a green alternative, may emit more greenhouse gases than fossil fuels and worsen global food and water security.

In an open letter released ahead of the COP30 climate summit in Belém, Brazil, the scientists said global leaders must “recognise the dangers of an uninhibited expansion of global biofuels demand.”

They cited research showing biofuels produce, on average, 16pc more emissions than fossil fuels, largely due to cropland expansion and high-emission crop cultivation.

The scientists warned that biofuel production threatens biodiversity and ecosystems in carbon-rich regions and risks depleting scarce water resources while contaminating soil and aquatic systems through

agricultural runoff.

They also cautioned that diverting crops for fuel could exacerbate global hunger and increase food prices and volatility in vulnerable economies.

Brazil, which will host COP30 next year, aims to double its biofuel use by 2030 despite pledging to uphold the Paris Agreement.

The letter estimates current production could add about 34 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent annually — the same as nearly 30 million diesel cars on the road.

Non-governmental groups in biofuel-producing nations are calling for tighter cultivation caps, stronger traceability, and community-based governance models.

The European Union introduced limits on first-generation, crop-based biofuels five years ago, capping their share of transport energy at 7pc.

Cian Delaney, a campaigner with the European Federation for Transport and Environment, said, “The evidence is clear — burning crops for fuel is a bad idea.

Governments must turn to truly sustainable alternatives rather than pushing solutions that do more harm than good.”

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