

Farmers, students join anti-WTO protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of farmers and students gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to protest against the World Trade Organisation's new round of trade liberalisation talks being held at the Mexican resort of Cancun.

Hafiz Uddin, a farmer who came from Tangail to join the protest, was sceptical about the outcome of WTO meeting.

"I have heard about so many meetings in my 70 years of life but these did not bring any positive change in the life of lakhs of farmers like me," he regretted.

The view was echoed by Khorshed Alam, a student of Dhaka University. "We have nothing to expect from the WTO meeting as history proves that such meetings only serve the interest of developed nations."

"But our government should try to

reap maximum benefit from the WTO meeting," he added.

The entire Shaheed Minar was dotted with various banners like 'No patent on life' and 'Junk WTO' and 'Put people over profit'.

Addressing a rally there, President of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Nur-E-Alam Ziku said the developing nations are under tremendous pressure from the rich nations to withdraw subsidy from the agriculture sector.

He blamed the United States for

applying double standard on agriculture sector.

The US has been pressing the developing nations to withdraw subsidy from the agricultural sector while the farmers in the US are being paid subsidies, Ziku said.

He urged Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, who is attending the WTO talks, not to sign any agreement that goes against the interests of Bangladesh.

"We don't want to import any hybrid seeds. Rather, we want to

produce crops from our own seeds," said Rezaul Karim Cowdhury of SUPRA, a non-governmental organisation.

Presided over by language movement hero Abdul Matin, the rally was also addressed by Dr Khaleda Salauddin of Women for Women, Quazi Faruq Ahmed of Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) and Comrade Morshed Ali.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League presidium member Abdus Samad Azad speaks at a meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday protesting district administration's refusal to allow party chief Sheikh Hasina to stay in the VVIP room at Chittagong Circuit House. City AL organised the meeting.

Campaign against AIDS

'Coordination of govt-NGO a must'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday called for proper coordination among the government and non-government organisations in their campaign against HIV/AIDS.

Proper coordination is a must for the prevention of AIDS epidemic as the resources for the purpose were not being utilised properly, they said on the last day of the three-day

workshop.

Representatives from different government, non-government and international organisations took part in the workshop on 'Advocacy on UNGASS Declaration and Commitment', organised by the STI/AIDS Network Bangladesh.

On the last day, the workshop came up with a set of recommendations on preventive measures which will be submitted to the government and the UNAIDS.

Dr. Shahnewaz Khan, chairperson of STI/AIDS Network, presented the recommendations divided in four themes care and support, preventive measures for vulnerable groups at high risk, preventive measures for young people and stigma and discrimination.

The recommendations included incorporating care, support and treatment protocol into the strategy, increasing promotional activities of using condoms and framing laws and guidelines to eliminate discriminations facing the people with HIV/AIDS and vulnerable groups.

The workshop also suggested involving stakeholders and civil society members in the anti-AIDS campaign and disseminating information among the vulnerable groups through the media.

Marten Giersing, representative of Unicef, Everisto Marowa, country coordinator of UNAIDS, and representatives from Europe, Malaysia and the Philippines were present.

Hasina condemns attack on Kaukhali AL leader

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina in a statement yesterday condemned the attack on Kaukhali upazila AL joint convenor Hazi Md Jafar Ali Khan Nanna.

"The criminals backed by BNP-Jamaat alliance made the attack on Nanna as part of their plan to eliminate Awami League by repressing and killing its leaders," she said.

She demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the culprits.