

# PRIVATE UNIV TUITION FEES VAT goes amid protests

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THOUSANDS of students of private universities called off their peaceful street protests Monday afternoon after the agitations over three days forced the government to roll back its controversial 7.5 per cent value added tax on tuition fees.

The demonstrations blocking vantage points on the streets, mostly close to private university campuses, brought traffic movement

on the streets and lanes of the capital to complete halt on Thursday, Sunday and Monday.

On Wednesday, the students of East West University alone held peaceful protests against the controversial VAT imposed by the government on the tuition fees of private universities.

The protests by students of all the private universities were sparked by the police firing rubber bullets and baton charge on the peaceful

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## VAT goes amid protests

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demonstration of the students of East West University at Rampura leaving at least 30 pupils injured.

On Monday afternoon the finance ministry in a statement announced the decision to roll back VAT on tuition fees of private universities, medical and engineering colleges as the students were unwilling to spend an additional 7.5 per cent on VAT after spending a lot of money on their studies at private institutions.

It said, as the students were unwilling to pay the additional money on VAT they left classes to hold ral-

lies at different places causing obstructions to public life and creating the scope to impede development activities.

It also said that as the government in no way wanted to create any impediments on the campuses or any convenience in public life it took the decision to withdraw 7.5 per cent VAT on private universities as well as medical and engineering colleges for fiscal 2015-16.

The finance ministry decision followed an instruction prime minister Sheikh Hasina gave to finance minister AMA Muhith at the weekly cabinet meeting.

said a minister.

The finance ministry statement was followed by a statutory regulatory order, better known as SRO, from the National Board of Revenue, withdrawing VAT on tuition fees with effect from June 4.

Student protesters hugged each other at different venues of their demonstrations as they heard the news of VAT withdrawal.

They took out victory processions near their campuses, left the streets and sought apologies from the capital's residents for the inconvenience caused to them.

No VAT on Education

organizers Faruque Ahmad Arif and Salahuddin Mithu called off the protests.

At Monday noon a group of students from the Government Titumir College wielding sticks attacked the pupils of private universities holding their protests against VAT at Banani leaving at least 30 of the peaceful protesters injured.

In the port city of Chittagong and the city of Sylhet hundreds of students held peaceful protests causing traffic jams on several streets.

According to the UGC, 4.6 lakh students are studying in the country's 83 private universities.