

VAT on private universities rescinded

*Remove VAT on private English
medium schools too*

WE welcome the cabinet's move to withdraw the 7.5 percent VAT that was imposed on the student tuition fees of the private universities. The decision has indeed come not a day too soon. The government had let the problem fester for as many as five days, which had translated into untold sufferings for the commuters in the major cities, especially in the capital. The government had to succumb to the language of pressure and not the language of reason. Even more bewildering is perhaps the Education Ministry's apparent exclusion from the decision making process.

From the very onset we have emphasised that VAT on education is unacceptable and to impose it on the educational institutions is a bad idea in the first place. This is especially so in the case of private educational institutions in general, where now students from the middle and lower middle income strata also study. We earnestly hope that in the future the government decision makers would be able to assess the likely outcome of their policies and feel the pulse of those who are going to be affected by it before finalising a decision.

Now that VAT on private universities has been withdrawn, there is no reason why it should not be lifted from English Medium schools and other private educational institutions.

Also, the government must favourably look into the demands of the public university teachers, which we feel are quite legitimate.

In this regard, the government should immediately sit with the teachers to resolve the crisis so that education in the public universities is not disrupted.