

VAT ON PVT UNIVERSITIES

Cops, students scuffle as march to PMO foiled

DU CORRESPONDENT

Scuffles broke out at the capital's Shahbagh yesterday after police stopped protesters heading towards the Prime Minister's Office to stage a sit-in there demanding withdrawal of the 7.5 percent value added tax (VAT) private university students have to pay from this fiscal year.

Hundreds of students from private universities, backed by Bangladesh Chhatra Union, broke through the barbed wire barricades in front of the National Museum but were stopped by armed personnel on the main street in front of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The protesters demonstrated there. They requested Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to order withdrawal of the tax and threatened that if she did not do that, they would stop academic activities.

In the morning, the students held a human chain at Shahbagh.

In the proposed budget for 2015-16, the government imposed 10 percent VAT on private universities, engineering and medical colleges. Later, it was reduced to 7.5 percent.

Jahin Faruk Amin, a student of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), said, "The newly imposed VAT will definitely harm the education system."

Demonstrations have been going on for the last two months, and a memorandum was submitted to President Abdul Hamid in this connection.