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NEW TOLL RATE

# Protest leads to withdrawal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the face of agitation by transport workers, the authorities yesterday postponed collecting higher toll from vehicles at the first China-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge over the Buriganga river.

Showing a new chart at the approaches to the bridge, Roads and Highways Department on Friday afternoon started taking toll from vehicles at rates up to 25 times the current one.

In protest, hundreds of three-wheeler, bus and truck drivers along with other transport workers blocked the roads leading to both sides of the bridge around 8:00am yesterday, creating long tailbacks in South Keraniganj and Postogola areas.

Sheikh Abdur Razzaq, officer-in-charge of Shyampur Police Station, said the demonstrators left the scene in the afternoon on assurance from RHD and police authorities that the new toll rate would be implemented later.

Thousands of people had to cross the bridge on foot before vehicular movement became normal around 3:00pm.

According to the chart, toll for a big rig was Tk 750, loaded lorry Tk 240, bus Tk 35 and small-truck Tk 170. Currently, all these vehicles pay the government only Tk 30 for using the bridge.

Mohammad Ismail, driver of an auto-rickshaw on Keraniganj-Postogola route, said they earn Tk 30 to Tk 50 for every trip after paying Tk 10 as bridge toll.

"As per the new rate, I would have to give Tk 25. It means I will earn almost nothing," he told The Daily Star.

RHD Additional Chief Engineer Aftab Ahmed said for the time being the bridge toll would be collected as per the previous rate.

He said the new decision was taken to calm the workers' agitation and ensure hassle-free return of Eid holidaymakers to the capital.

"We will decide on collecting toll as per the new rate once the situation becomes normal," he said.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

A mother checks on her infant as she walks on the First Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge over the Buriganga. Protesting a sudden hike in bridge toll, transport workers yesterday blocked both ends of the bridge, forcing thousands of commuters to cross the bridge on foot.

# Three tests for Nasir

Ctg-dwellers look to new mayor for relief as he takes office today

ARUN BIKASH DEY, from Chittagong

Newly elected Chittagong Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin faces major challenges as he takes office today, around three months after the city polls.

He will have to keep Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) free from partisanship, address the perennial waterlogging problem, avoid conflict of interest and regain the city's image as a clean and green city.

The 41 ward councillors and 14 women reserved councillors of the

CCC will also take over their offices today. The tenure of the previous mayor and councillors expired yesterday.

During electioneering, Nasir had pledged to avoid partisanship as mayor. His predecessor M Manjur Alam had been successful in this regard.

Then an adviser to the BNP chairperson, Manjur was not active in politics. Many BNP men had



expressed resentment that Manjur as mayor didn't do them any favours.

Nasir, the general secretary of Chittagong city Awami League, has been with the party for a long time. He maintains a close relationship with the party men. So it will be difficult for him to ensure non-partisan service for all.

City residents want the mayor to discharge his duties, rising above his

political identity.

The mayor has vowed to end waterlogging permanently within his five-year tenure. Experts said making it happen would be a big challenge for him.

Hundreds of buildings have been built in the city over the years, flouting the National Building Code. Many water bodies have been filled up. Canals and drains have been occupied by grabbers amid lax monitoring and enforcement of law by

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## 'Outlaw' killed in 'gunfight'

STAR REPORT

Leader of an outlawed party was killed during a "gunfight" with police in Kushtia, while a Jamaat activist was injured in a similar incident in Satkhira early yesterday.

The dead, Palash Malitha, 29, son of Abul Malitha of Khamarpur village in Kushtia's Mirpur upazila, was a regional leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-ML).

Acting on a tip-off that a group of robbers was preparing for committing a highway robbery in Bhangabottala village of the upazila, a police team raided the area around 2:30am, reports our Kushtia correspondent, quoting Kazi Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station.

When the law enforcers reached the spot, the criminals opened fire on police, prompting them to return fire that triggered a "gunfight", the police official said.

After half an hour of the gun battle, the robbers fled and police found the body

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## World's largest flower blooms

SKYNEWS.COM.AU

A Titan Arum, believed to be the world's largest flower, has bloomed in Tokyo for the first time in five years.

The two-metre high herbaceous plant has attracted hundreds of visitors to the city's Jindai Botanical Garden this week, forcing it to extend its opening hours.

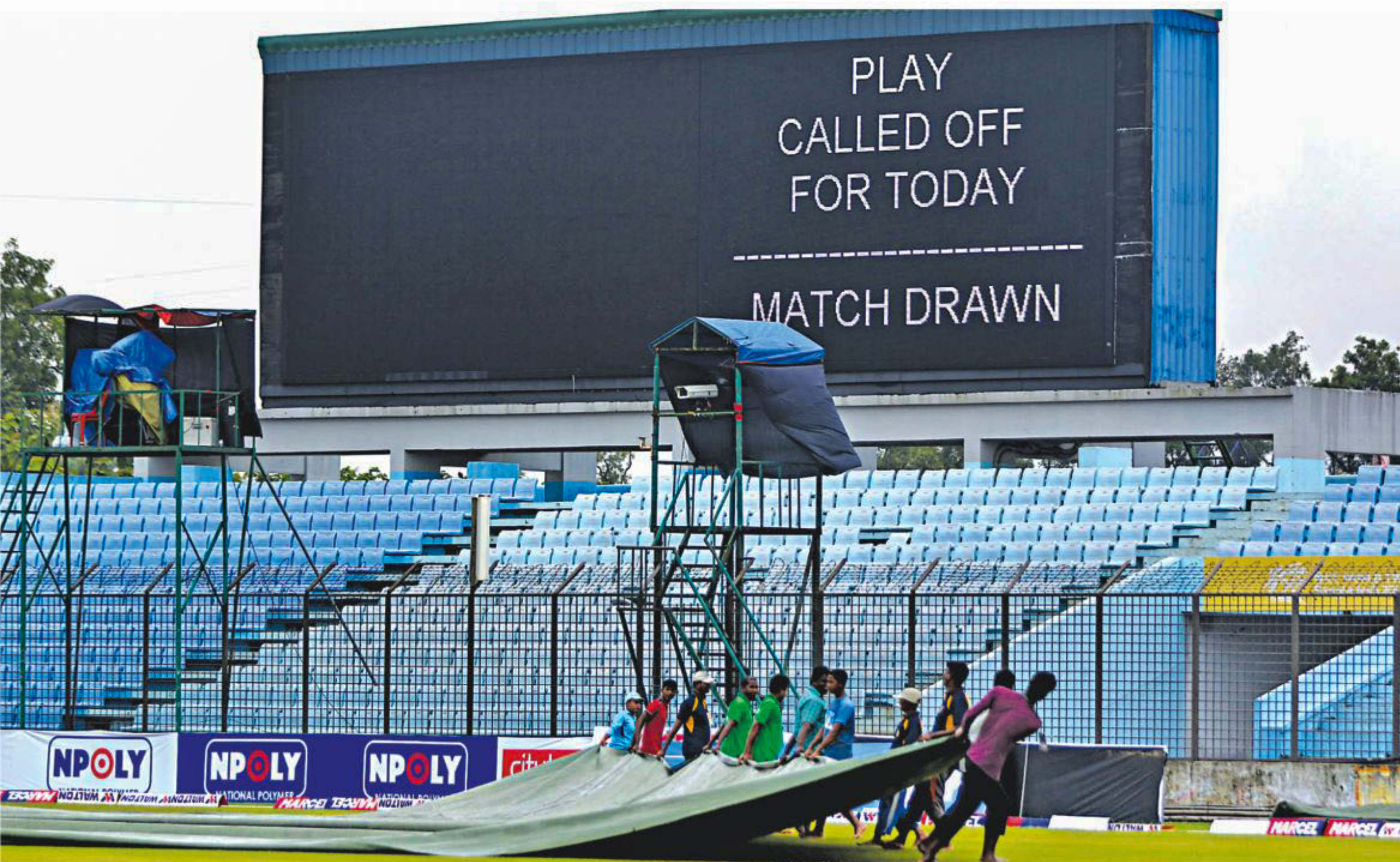
The flower blooms rarely (maybe three or four times in its 40-year life) and that too only for two or three days, which is why experts believe Friday will be the last day visitors will be able to admire it.

The last time the species bloomed in a public garden was in July, 2010.

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PHOTO: AFP



RAIN THE SPOILER: Heavy rain for a second successive day yesterday doused all the excitement of the opening Test between Bangladesh and South Africa at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. The game ended in a tame draw, leaving all to play for in the second and final Test starting in Dhaka on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## Hijab banned in pre-medical test in India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian Supreme Court on Friday refused to allow aspirants appearing for All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT) to wear a "hijab", saying that "your faith won't disappear" if it was not worn on a particular day.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## 'Africa is on the move'

Obama on landmark Kenya visit urging fight against graft, terrorism

AFP, Nairobi

US President Barack Obama yesterday declared that "Africa is on the move", praising the spirit of entrepreneurship at a business summit in Kenya as he kicked off a landmark visit.

Obama arrived in Kenya late on Friday, making his first visit to the country of his father's birth since he was elected president.

"I wanted to be here, because Africa is on the move, Africa is one of the fastest growing regions in the world," Obama said, drawing cheers and applause from delegates.

"People are being lifted out of poverty, incomes are up, the middle class is growing and young people like you are harnessing technology to change the way Africa is doing business," Obama said in his first official

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



PRAYER TIMING

JULY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15

JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



## ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন এলাকায় অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড অপসারণের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিগত ০১/০৭/২০১৫খ্রিঃ বিলবোর্ড ব্যবসায়ীদের সাথে এক মতবিনিময় সভায় মাননীয় মেয়র জনাব আনিসুল হক ১ (এক) মাসের মধ্যে সকল অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড অপসারণে ব্যবসায়ীদের সহযোগিতা চান এবং ব্যবসায়ীদের পক্ষ থেকে তাকে এ বিষয়ে আশ্বাস প্রদান করা হয়। কিন্তু ব্যবসায়ীদের পক্ষ হতে অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড উচ্ছেদে কোন কার্যক্রম দৃশ্যমান হয়নি। ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের নিজস্ব উদ্যোগে অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড উচ্ছেদ কার্যক্রম শুরু হলে বিগত ১২/০৭/২০১৫খ্রিঃ পুনরায় ব্যবসায়ীদের পক্ষ থেকে সময় প্রার্থনা করার প্রেক্ষাপটে ০৫/০৮/২০১৫খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত উচ্ছেদ কার্যক্রম স্থগিত করা হয়েছে। বর্ণিত সময়ের মধ্যে বিলবোর্ড ব্যবসায়ীদের এলাকাভিত্তিক অপসারণ কার্যক্রম গ্রহণের জন্য পুনঃ অনুরোধ করা হলো। এছাড়া বাড়ির মালিকগণকে তাদের বাড়ির ছাদে, দেয়ালে বা জায়গায় ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের অনুমোদনবিহীন বিলবোর্ড ভাড়া দিলে তা অপসারণের জন্য অনুরোধ জানানো হলো। অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড অপসারণের জন্য ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশনের পক্ষ থেকে প্রদত্ত এটা ই সর্বশেষ সুযোগ। সংশ্লিষ্ট ব্যক্তিবর্গ অবৈধ বিলবোর্ড অপসারণে ব্যর্থ হলে উচ্ছেদের ব্যবস্থায় খরচ আদায়সহ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা ও অন্যান্য কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।

সূত্র নং- ৪৬.২০৭.০১৮.১৮.০০.১৬৮.২০১৫

তাং- ২৩/০৭/১৫

জিডি-২৪৬০

কর্তৃপক্ষ

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন