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A man stands on a rickshaw, peering at the long line of traffic ahead. The ongoing curfew was relaxed between 10:00am and 5:00pm yesterday, leading to traffic congestions throughout the capital. The photo was taken in the Mohammadpur bus stand area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 7-HR CURFEW BREAK

# Gridlock returns to Dhaka streets

HELEMUL ALAM

Traffic congestions in different parts of Dhaka meant the capital returned to its usual self yesterday after almost a week of violence, along with curfew and a three-day general holiday.

City dwellers thronged banks, government and private offices to complete pending tasks during the seven-hour curfew break window.

However, they faced immense sufferings due to traffic jams at different points, as numerous vehicles hit the streets at once.

The suspension of metro rail and elevated expressway operations since Thursday, following large scale damages during recent violence, added to the sufferings.

A shortage of public transport, particularly buses, forced commuters to wait for hours or walk miles to reach their destinations.

Long queues were observed at banks, while people rushed to government and other offices, which were open for four hours from 11:00am.

Major thoroughfares, including Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Mirpur Road, Airport Road, and Begum Rokeya Sarani, as well as key intersections like Mohakhali,

Banani, Shahbagh, Tejgaon, Gulshan, and Kalyanpur, were crammed with vehicles.

Polas Miah, a resident of Mirpur-12, who usually commutes to his office in Dilkusha via metro rail daily, said he spent more than three hours on the road by bus for what used to be a 30-minute journey on the metro rail.

"The metro rail made our lives very easy, but its suspension has put us in serious trouble again," he said.

Anwara Begum's ordeal was different. She not only waited on the road for hours but also had to walk miles due to severe traffic congestion.

"It took four and a half hours to reach the court area in Old Dhaka from Kalyanpur due to severe traffic congestion at different points," she said.

Anwara left her CNG-run three-wheeler at Shahbagh after being stuck for half an hour and then walked to Gulistan, from where she hired a rickshaw to reach her destination.

Jhilan, a driver of a CNG-run three-wheeler, earned Tk 1,000 by yesterday evening despite starting his day at 8:00am due to traffic congestion in Uttara and Gulistan.

"I left Uttara with passengers at 8:00am

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## All BRTA services remain halted

Officials use makeshift tents at BRTA, Setu Bhaban following arson attack



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

All kinds of BRTA services, including the issuance of vehicle registrations and driving licences, are suspended across the country after the entire electricity system of BRTA headquarters was damaged during the recent unrest.

The headquarters of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority in the capital's Banani area, which housed the data server necessary to provide these services, was torched and vandalised by miscreants on July 18.

"All of our services are suspended across the country and will remain so until the operation of data server can be resumed," BRTA Chairman

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## Scenes of despair at CMM court

Family members throng its premises to find their arrested loved ones

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Bristy Begum went to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in the old part of the city from Manik Nagar in Jatrabari to catch a glimpse of her husband Fazlur Rahman.

Fazlur, 40, who used to work as a manager at a courier service, was arrested by police early yesterday.

"Police arrested my husband from near our residence around 1:00am. I came to the court to see my husband. I am sitting here for over six hours, but could not find him," Bristy told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

When this correspondent met her, a seemingly distressed Bristy, 30, along with her child Fariha, 5, and two relatives, was waiting in front of the CMM court.

Failing to meet Fazlur, the only earning member of the four-member family, she returned home after 5:30pm.

"My husband is innocent. He did not engage in any violent activities, yet police arrested him," she said.

One of her relatives said, "Police checked



PHOTO: STAR

While waiting to see her arrested husband, July, 21, feeds her 18-month-old son in front of the CMM court yesterday afternoon.

Fazlur's cell phone and found a video clip of the clashes. This is why they arrested him."

Later in the day, Fazlur was sent to jail after police produced him before the court in a violence case filed with Jatrabari Police Station.

Fazlur was among the 413 arrestees produced

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## DNCC resumes household waste collection: mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation has removed around 10,000 tonnes of garbage, generated during the recent violence on different city roads in DNCC areas.

An official of DNCC said they started clearing up the garbage, including bricks, felled trees, and grilles of medians on Monday night and completed it by Tuesday noon.

DNCC has collected garbage from different roads in the Pragati Sarani, Badda, Rampura, Mohakhali, Banani, Kazipara, Shevrapara, Mirpur, Uttara, and Mohammadpur areas.

He said they also resumed collecting regular household garbage.

Meanwhile, DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam and IGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday visited the DNCC Zone-10 office at Mirpur-10 to witness the damaged vehicles.

Miscreants have vandalised various offices and

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**A total of 67 DNCC vehicles have been damaged. Of these, 29 garbage-carrying vehicles were completely charred, alongside 21 jeeps used by officers.**

## Markets open, but mostly deserted

SUKANTA HALDER

Shopping malls and markets in the capital opened yesterday, after being closed for four consecutive days, but the presence of buyers was very low.

The shops and malls were open from 10:00am to 3:00pm, as there was a break in the curfew during those hours.

Businessmen said due to the unrest over the last week, panic still persists among the buyers. So, many customers chose not to visit the shops.

Very few customers, who were in urgent need of certain products, visited the stores. It will likely take a few more days for the situation to completely return to normal, they added.

At least 150 people died in clashes between agitators and law enforcers and ruling party activists till Wednesday during the quota reform protest.

Ashraf Ali, manager of a retail shop at Noorjahan Super Market of the capital's New Market, said, "There is still a kind of panic among the people. As a result, even after opening the outlet on Wednesday, four days later, the number of customers is very low."

"Usually, products worth around Tk 10,000 are sold between 10:00am and 1:00pm on a regular day. However, yesterday we sold only Tk 3,000 worth of products. Hopefully, when the situation returns to normal, buyers will also increase," he said.

Khalid Mahmood Khan, co-founder of Kay Kraft, said some of their outlets were opened, and some were not. Not all outlets that were opened had visitors, he added.

However, most outlets sold some products, albeit very little, he said, adding that at least customers knew

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Although markets and shops were open from 10:00am to 3:00pm during the curfew break, there were very few customers. The photo was taken in Bailey Road area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Publish actual number of casualties

**Demands Garment Sramik Sanghati**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati and Mahila Parishad have expressed concern over the current situation in the country.

In a statement, Taslima Akhter, president of Garment Sramik Sanghati; and Anjan Das, vice-president, condemned the killings, violence, arrests, and harassment.

Referring to media reports, they said approximately 197 people have been shot dead, 2,657 arrested, and numerous cases filed. They also criticised the government for shutting down the internet, which has restricted the public's right to information.

They demanded immediate publication of the actual number of casualties.

In a separate statement, Mahila Parishad condemned the elimination of female quota.