

Miscreants on the prowl at Panthapath

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Shop owners and residents of Panthapath area are getting increasingly concerned with the activities of a gang of muggers belonging to a certain Sohel - Mannan group.

The Sohel Mannan group and another gang of miscreants led by an alleged extortionist Bojlu, all reportedly have their bases at Rajabazar-Dalipara slum. The men belonging to these groups have long-standing criminal records with the Tejgaon police station.

The muggers are mainly on the prowl between 1pm to 3pm and after 8pm. During the day, the Rajabazar-Dalipara alley becomes a convenient spot for the goons as it is seldom crowded. Unsuspecting pedestrians are easy preys.

Ahmed Sharif, a local resi-

dent, was mugged in the first week of June. He was going towards the Bashundhara City after buying a mobile phone when five to six men stopped him. They beat him up and took away all his valuables.

"The only reason I did not go to a police station is because no one ever gets his belongings back after reporting to the police," said a dejected Ahmed.

"The groups of muggers wait for their prospective victims at times when very few people venture out on the streets. They know that no one will be there to respond to the pleas of a victim at those hours," said general secretary of Panthapath Business Association, Shahed Osman.

"These groups divide their men in separate sections. A gang of five to six would stand in front of the Rajabazar-Dalipara alley. When someone passes by,

they intentionally collide with that person and starts up a quarrel during which that poor fellow is mugged," said a businessman of the area.

Local residents complained that the gangs have been active for the past six months but the police is surprisingly unable to catch them.

Sub-inspector Mohammed Atiqur Rahman of Tejgaon police station on the other hand claimed that residents or the business community of that area never complained of any problems.

"We have deployed police force to patrol that area like we do everywhere else. They (the locals) should give us written complaints with names of the miscreants."

Crime was on the rise in the same area about six or seven months ago after the death of notorious criminal 'Pichchi'

Hannan. Hannan's brother-in-law, another local hoodlum planned to take control and extortion, hijacking and looting by his gang became common.

"After suffering for three to four years because of Hannan and other criminals, we decided to take matters into our own hands as the police would not help. We formed a 'lathi-bashi bahini' (stick and whistle force) to combat such extortionists," said the general secretary of the Poshchim Panthapath Baboshaik Shamiti (West Panthapath Businessmen's Association).

The lathi-bashi bahini received support from the local police administration and incidents of extortion and illegal toll collection went down, said local business sources.



The alley at Bou Bazar that helps muggers to escape.

STAR PHOTO

5x2

13.5x6

8x2