

# Cases of mugging by doping finally on the decline

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers claim that the activities of "agyan and malom parties" -- gangs of muggers who rob their victims after doping them with drug-tainted food or putting irritating balm in their eyes -- in the streets of Dhaka has declined recently.

The capturing of a good number of muggers, ringleaders and their godfathers has resulted in the downward trend of the activities of the agyan and malom parties, believe officials of law enforcement agencies.

"Their [agyan and malom party] activities have been on the decline lately. The situation is pretty much under control now," said Mohammad Asaduzzaman, additional deputy commissioner (ADC) of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and in-charge of the team specialising in tracing the agyan and malom party members.

"We managed to capture more than 150 members of the agyan and malom party since May this year. A number of godfathers and leaders [of the ring] have been apprehended and a huge quantity of drugs that are used by the muggers has been impounded," he said.

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earlier.

According to the sources, around 45 victims were treated at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) during the first 20 days of December last year, prior to the Eid-ul-Azha. In October, the number of victims treated at the same hospital was around 80.

"We receive daily reports from the DMCH on the number of victims they admit. There have been no reports of victims over the past three days. They reported admitting two victims today," said a police official on Sunday.

A Source at Ramna Division of DMP told this correspondent that 10 cases of muggings were reported in five police stations under the division in December -- a figure that is quite low in contrast with 18 cases of muggings reported in October.

However striking the statistics may seem, these in fact represent only a small slice of the whole pie

as the actual numbers of victims and mugging incidents are much higher, law enforcers admitted saying that most such incidents go unreported.

On an average, only around ten percent of the incidents are reported to the authorities and mugging is rampant in most public places, said the law enforcers.

Paresh Das, a business owner, was mugged during the first week of December when he was stuck at a traffic signal late in the evening.

After a long and tiring day, an exhausted Das could not resist the temptation of having the orange juice offered by the passenger sitting right next to him. After having the drink, the next thing he remembers is waking up in the emergency section of the DMCH.

In a similar fashion, another five victims landed at DMCH on December 20 as they fell uncon-

scious after having drug-tainted food that they received or purchased from CNG autorickshaw drivers and vendors selling green coconut and pickles.

According to law enforcers, these are just a few forms of deceptive methods used by the agyan party members. Well-integrated into the crowd, posing to be pedestrians, commuters, food vendors, transport workers or even taxi drivers, these muggers are on the prowl for their targets across the entire city. They are especially active in crowded public places such as airports, railway stations and bus terminals.

Zia International Airport, Kamalapur Rail Terminal, bus terminals at Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Mohakhali; and numerous other places throughout the city including Farmgate, Gulistan, Shyamoli, Mohammadpur Town Hall, Shonir Akhra, and Demra are the favourite workplaces of

these muggers.

Fresh visitors arriving from abroad or from outside the city are usually favourite targets of these muggers because these visitors are not used to being watchful of such muggers and they usually carry larger amounts of money and other valuable possessions with them.

Disguised as fellow pedestrians or food vendors, these muggers gain the trust of their prey by mingling with them through small talks. The muggers later raid their victims' belongings after sedating them by having them eat foodstuff contaminated with sedative drugs such as 'Rohypnol' or 'Roofies' and tablets named Etibem.

According to experts, these drugs contain a higher ratio of alcohol than in most other drugs available easily. These drugs can easily be added to the food items without the victim's knowledge and the victim does not even taste the difference while having the tainted food or drink. Large doses of this drug applied on a person can sedate the person and can even cause memory loss of the person.

"We have a group of specialised police officers dedicated entirely to hunt down these specific muggers," said ADC Asaduzzaman of the DB. "We have already apprehended a lot of suspects. We are on the right track and hopefully things will be even better in the future."

## QUEST FOR DRINKING WATER



An old man rowing a boat with pots and pitchers carrying drinking water at Daskandi in Trimohini of Khilgaon thana in the city. Locals are used to pilfer the precious drops from supply lines of Wasa since water crisis has gripped this low-lying area for a long time.

STAR PHOTO



STAR PHOTO

Rickshaw pullers dropping off passengers at the Dhaka Zoo were seen paying Tk 1 as the lessees of the parking lot of the zoo were forcing them to pay the toll. The rickshaws even had to pay the money just for taking a U-turn in front of the zoo entrance. The heartless lessees turned a blind eye to the hard earned money of the poor rickshaw pullers when they begged to let them go.

## Winter birds at JU

FROM PAGE 21

kestrel, coming from the Central Asia and the Himalayas.

Dr Monirul Khan, assistant professor of zoology at JU, cleared a common misconception about the migratory birds. "There is a misconception among the general people that only duck species are migratory birds. Actually there are various other species of birds who mostly dwell in the shallow water around the lake and bushes."

"They are not swimmers like ducks. They arrived earlier but remain less visible because they stay at the side of the lakes and in the bushes. They don't fly in large groups."

Most of the migratory birds feed on weed, insects and snails. Some of them migrate for breeding.

Movement of the birds is however confined to only two lakes on the campus. They are preferring the lakes beside Jahanara Imam Hall and in front of the Registrar Building.

Dr Monirul mentioned that aquatic vegetation in these two lakes are better than other lakes that attract the birds.

Professor Feeroz on other

hand said the gathering of admission seekers has become a major disturbance to the birds. A large number of admission seekers crowd the campus during the admission tests.

Often visitors from outside arrange day trips to the campus. This is another disturbance. For taking better picture visitors very often throw rocks at the birds to make them fly, Feeroz added. "However, in general, privacy of the birds is respected by everyone on the campus. We are proud of our awareness."

Since 1980s as many as 50 foreign migratory species were spotted on the JU campus among which 30 come more often than the others. There are around 120 native birds who migrate to the campus from other parts of the country. There are also many residents of JU campus.

Like every year the Zoology Department of JU will arrange a bird fair on the campus in the first week of February. A large number of visitors from Dhaka city go to the campus during the fair to watch the birds.

## Illegal outlets at Wonderland

FROM PAGE 21

of Gulshan Central Park to Via Media in 1990 to develop the Wonderland amusement park in a way that subsequently caused public protest.

DCC formed a committee comprising chief executive officer, ward commissioner, additional chief engineer, zonal executive officer chief town planner and chief estate officer to file a report on Wonderland amusement park, Shamoly amusement park and Swamibagh amusement park, all three owned by Via Media.

The committee members visited Wonderland amusement park on August 22, 2005 and submitted a report, detailing establishments in deviation of layout submitted by the company along with the tender documents.

According to the report, Wonderland authorities have not got the layout design approved and none of the establishments in zone-A has been set up in compliance with the submitted layout. California Fried Chicken has been set up in this zone recently.

Rides and establishments in all the zones from A to F, as proposed in the submitted layout, have been altered at random with addition of unapproved set-ups, says the report.

Four shops and a storehouse have been set up in addition to the approved establishments in zone-D, according to the report. Commercial gain has been the prime concern instead of recreation as a result of excessive set-ups in zone-E.

Western Grill was set up in zone-C long after the report was submitted.

DCC chief town planner Sirajul Islam, who was on the committee, said that the committee took up the submitted layout plan, compared with the ground situation and pointed out the deviations.

"As per findings of committee, the company has resorted to deviations in many ways from the layout it provided with the tender document," he said.

Managing director of Wonderland, GMM Rahman said, "I had to change the internal layout design in the way of adding new games and establishments."

He said that the site of California Fried Chicken is earmarked for a stall in the layout but they did not build it in the beginning.

The site of faircraft restaurant is also earmarked for an establishment, he said. "It is not mentioned what kind of establishment it would be."

"We have not set up anything beyond the layout," Rahman claimed. "I would have explained any alteration and demolished any unapproved establishments had the DCC called me. But DCC has never served me any notice."

DCC chief estate officer Abu Mohammad Yusuf said, "I am not aware of the issue of Wonderland, as I have just taken over the new position. I will look into it."

Town planners and Gulshan residents question the very idea of depriving the residents of a park, and using it for a commercial venture instead. Such an amusement spot should be set up on the outskirts of the city as in the case of Fantasy Kingdom and Nandan Park, they said.

## Advertising, Bank & market timing

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### MARKET CLOSED

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Bishal Center-Friday  
Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday  
Polwell Market-Friday  
BCS Computer City-Friday  
Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday  
Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday  
Stadium Market-Friday  
Bangabazar Market-Friday  
National Museum-Thursdays  
Ahsan Manzil-Thursdays  
New Market-Tuesdays  
Gausia Market-Tuesdays  
Mouchak Market-Sundays  
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesdays  
Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesdays  
Eastern Plaza-Sundays  
Farmview Super Market-Sundays  
Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sundays  
Dhaka Zoo-Sundays  
Shishu Jadughar-Sundays