The common perception is that crimes like mugging, receiving threatening phone calls and extortion should not be reported to the police. This is a major setback in the fight against crime, if they are not even reported then how will they be tackled? Old habits die hard, and the police along with other law enforcement agencies have a reputation of harassing people who file such cases, often stopping people from filing them at all. The level of distrust between the two parties is quite high and in between the only losers are the people who refuse to report such crimes. Their cases go unsolved while the police force do little more than twiddle their thumbs so that they can rightly claiming that reported crimes is much lower than it was before.



Many criminal activities are not reported, thus leading the law enforcers to believe the crime rate is lower than it actually is.

A senior Rapid Action (RAB) Official who spoke on the condition of anonymity had a different take on the issue of reporting crime, he said, "the truth of the matter is that there is a gap between the figures we can show you and the real number of crimes being reported. I would not call it public apathy but many people just don't report crimes because they do not want to go through the hassle of our court system." This remains a valid point, the legal process in long, drawn out, complicated and generally does not work without a bribe or two. With that thought at the back of their minds, the public is often willing to write off a court case and the hassle of the cops rather than report crimes such as muggings and extortion rackets.

Ivan Ashraf, a student of North South University says, "Why would I go to the cops and file a case if I was mugged? When probably all that will happen is that they will hassle me; plus the legal process will hold up my case. And all this trouble would be over a simple mobile phone and a few hundred takas, it's just not worth it." A friend of his chimed in, "The mere thought that the police will actually help us has never even occurred to me. Many of us distrust them and the system too much to even report a crime. Especially if what has been stolen or taken is replaceable, then we don't even bother at all. It's better to just replace it, incur a loss and keep the incident to one's self." Public perception and a communication gap between the people and their law enforcers has led to this situation, where both sides have completely different views on the same topic. The police can point to their books and say crime is much lower than it was before, but the public by not reporting a lot of crime can rightly say they feel unsafe, because people around them are being mugged and threatened. For this situation to be resolved or even tackled these two parallel plots must be brought together. The following example should raise even the most disbelieving eyebrows.



From a drive in Chittagong's New Market area Rab 7 arrested Moheshkhali's top terrorist Ziaur Rahman Zia with five firearms-- clearly a sign that criminals are being picked up.
(photo: Zobaer Hossain Sikder.)