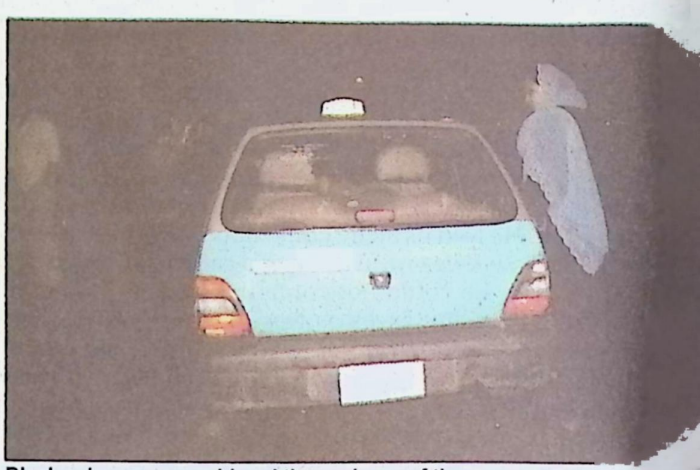
mitted, the numbers being caught by the police actually look quite slim. Yet the question still remains, is crime on the rise?

The same RAB official who asked not to be named said, "There has been a spike in crime in the last three months, but I will still say times are much better now than they were before." He went on to add, "In the current situation the motives of crimes have changed. There are more crimes based on personal vendettas and enmity between people, as well as cases of fraud, matters relating to property and of course cheated labourers looking for work abroad." The traditional gangs where there was an organised system to make money by committing crimes is on the wane. There are still individuals who work along those same lines, but even their numbers have decreased. What is alarming is how easily arms are available to such criminals. Programmes such as X-Crime on Bangla Vision graphically show how easy it is even for petty muggers to own a gun. These programmes serve a dual process, while logically the public should hail such programming because criminals are caught in each episode; it also in a strange way helps to propagate fear. Instead of taking the positives out of such a programme, people often claim what is shown on the programme is merely the tip of the iceberg and that there are many more criminals out there. They hear their cases, see how they work and fear they will meet someone like them on the streets, just this time without the cameras rolling.

The current spike in crime and perceived danger is more sociological and psychological than most may admit. In the past few months almost all the corrupt business leaders and politicians who were so mercilessly taken away have been released. This sends out the wrong signals to the public as faith in law enforcers wanes. From being the saviours of the nation, they have slipped back into old habits and all the public can see is that the people who valiantly put the bad guys away are letting them go. When the joint forces took people into custody there was an air of finality about it, people would be tried for their crimes and they would pay. On their release the general public feels more unsafe than ever and as we know very well, fear spreads further fear.

The RAB official says, "The last time there was a spike in crime was when hawkers were evicted from across the city. Muggings increased almost overnight and there were a few cases that pointed in the direction of hawkers taking up mugging to make ends meet." He continues, "We have all been taught criminal psychology and using those skills we analysed two muggings where people were killed. The reason they were killed was that the muggers were not professional criminals, they panicked and killed people in the ensuing chaos. If they were 'professional' criminals then they would never have committed murder. This was obviously a hawker looking for some money through a mugging and when a factor changed beyond his known capacity, he panicked and killed a person. We are not seeing crimes along those lines now,



Black cabs once considered the saviours of the average commuter, have become nothing more than mugging traps.



Travelling especially at night has become very risky.

Programmes such as X-Crime on Bangla Vision graphically show how easy it is even for petty muggers to own a gun. These programmes serve a dual process, while logically the public should hail such programming because criminals are caught in each episode; it also in a strange way helps to propagate fear.

there is a slight spike, but nothing which should create widespread panic."

It all boils down to the same question, is crime really on the rise, or are public insecurities flaming a fire larger than the real problem? Nuru Mia a rickshaw puller in