

Empty roads no matter how well lit, are best not travelled unless one wants the 'inevitable' to occur.

Karwan Bazaar says, "I am not sure if crime is on the rise, I do hear of a lot of muggings, but what I do know is that fear is on the rise." That opinion is probably what best sums up this argument. In comparison to a few years ago crime is far lower than it is now, but high profile politicians and businessmen charged with corruption and other crimes being released, coupled with an increase in muggings and extortion rackets have created a culture of fear, which the public is having a hard time breaking out of. There are a host of other factors that must be looked into, the population of Dhaka is now nearly 15 million and our police force is horribly understaffed. That in itself creates a situation where crime should increase. Afizul Islam says, "the logistical support to tackle the current population is nowhere near enough. Yet even with that problem we are dealing with the situation as best as we can. Crime is nowhere near as bad as it was before and criminals are being caught regularly. What else can we do with the resources at our disposal? All I can ask is for the public to work with us, rather than propagate fear within themselves."

At RAB the criminal conviction rate is a staggering 75%, among the highest in South Asia, but even that statistic is coupled with an 11% criminal conviction rate for the police. Seemingly there is more than a slip betwixt cup and lip, as criminals are caught but the legal process often sets them free. If that is really the case what else is the public to think, other than that the streets are not safe? The answer lies somewhere in between what the law enforcers and the public say. Yes, there has been a surge in crime, but that does not necessarily mean crime is on the rise again. But for that crime to be tackled and the surge brought down again, the public and the police must work hand in hand. There should be no scare mongering and the public must learn to be patient, change cannot occur overnight. Afizul Islam has returned home every day for the past week well past three in the morning. He says, "I can't slack off, the criminals know when you are taking it a little easy." In a way he is right, the police and public can't slack off, they must work together to help fix this current spike and make sure it does not become a permanent rise. ■