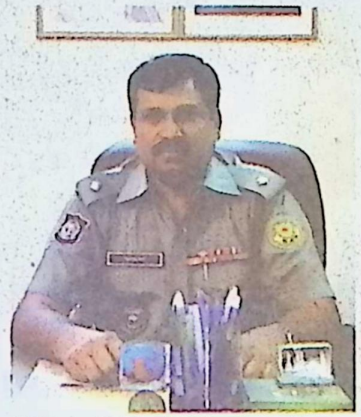


Md Kamal Uddin, OC, Gulshan Thana



SM Shiblee Numan, OC, Ramna Thana

kick. But I could see the dark stain of blood spreading through my trousers. Then I felt something being rubbed on my eyes. I couldn't see and my eyes felt as if they were on fire."

The criminals pushed Absar out of the taxi near Khilkhet. Dazed and bleeding, he staggered to a bus stop. Locals took him to hospital.

"The doctors said if I hadn't been taken to hospital so quickly my cornea might have been damaged," says Absar. "I couldn't move about comfortably for a month, and I still feel pain in my thigh."

Like many mugging victims, Siraj Syed didn't go to the police. Absar Uddin did.

"Three days after I was attacked, I went with my brother to the police station. The second officer took down my statement and I was told to file a General Diary. They asked me if I could remember the registration number of the taxi cab. Of course I couldn't. But I gave them a description of the driver, and the stolen property. They said they would call me if anything turned up. They didn't seem too hopeful."



•ung people carrying small high value items such as mobiles and iPods are frequent targets.



Muggers are using newer and more aggressive techniques.

The problem is reaching alarming proportions. Police sources say more than a hundred groups comprised of about 1,200 muggers are active at around 200 spots in the capital. Scores of people are attacked every day. Almost everyone has a friend or relative who has been mugged or hijacked. Many have lost their lives. Horror stories abound.

"It used to be that being mugged was a rare accident," says Dilara Begum, a boutique shop owner in Dhanmondi. "If you stayed away from the bad areas, you were safe. But these days if you venture out alone after dark, you can expect to be mugged. It has happened to me, my husband and my son. My son was mugged twice while returning home from his university."

No area is immune. While certain parts of Agargaon, Mirpur, Jatrabari, and Tejgaon have long been known as trouble hotspots, recent trends have seen the affluent neighbourhoods of Gulshan, Banani and Dhanmondi being targeted.

"It is true that the muggers have become more mobile," says Md Kamal Uddin, Officer in Charge (OC) of Gulshan Thana. "Previously mugging used to be pretty much localised. But nowadays the use of vehicles, often stolen ones, has added a new dimension."

The technique is fairly straightforward. The criminals cruise the area in cars and microbuses looking for victims. Once they spot someone on a rickshaw or walking alone, they will drive up to the victim and