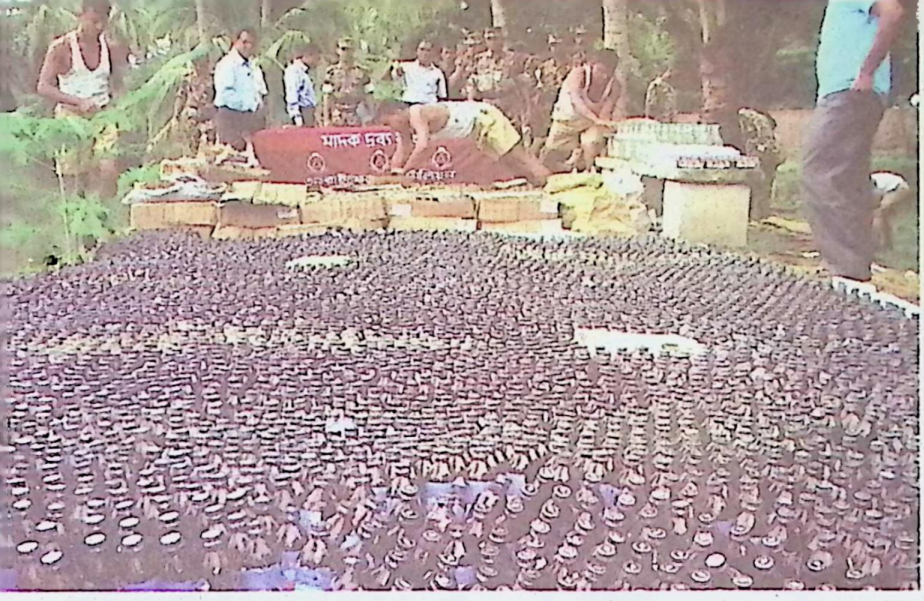
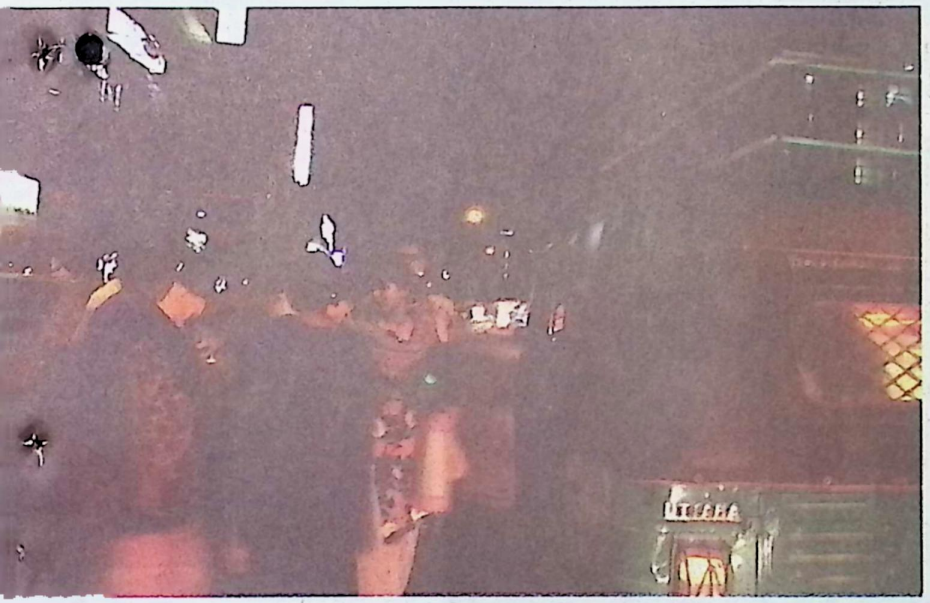


The police say despite resource limitations they are vigilant against muggers and drug peddlers.



Affluent neighbourhoods have become targets for drive-by muggings in recent days.



Hossain Khaled

> "There is a strong belief that many of the criminals have political shelter and their reach is longer than the arm of the law. It is up to the government to prove this wrong. If the people lose faith in the law, good governance becomes impossible."

"The officer didn't seem very interested," recalls Akmal. "I asked him to alert any police patrols near airport entrance with the description, but he wouldn't. He said it was useless without a number, and that I should go home."

It is a catch 22 situation. Monirul Islam, Deputy Commissioner, Detective and Criminal Intelligence Division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police admits that the prevailing public perception that the police are either unwilling or unable to fight street crime is hampering efforts to bring the situation under control. But he says it is the duty of the public to come forward.

"If the crime is not reported, how can we catch the criminals?" asks the DC, DB. "It is true that people are not comfortable coming to the police, but that must change. Despite limitations we are trying to project a people-friendly image."

In a stark reminder of how widespread the problem has become, Swiss Ambassador Dora Rapold, who is also the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, wrote to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the first week of May informing the ministry that foreigners and diplomats, especially women, are becoming victims of mugging and other crimes.

"There seems to be a pattern to the incidents that expatriates, particularly females, are made target. The fact of the use of firearms and knives in the incidents is extremely worrying and it has led to serious injuries to