

Pickpockets target crowded areas in Capital

While police say it is not a daily occurrence, a student found four wallets without any cash on Muroor road

- By Samihah Zaman, Staff Reporter
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Abu Dhabi: While waiting for a bus last month, M.A. felt someone reach into his pocket and grab his wallet. Before he could get a look at the person's face, the person had disappeared in the crowd of people at the bus stop on Muroor Road.

M.A., a 30-year-old gardener from Bangladesh who arrived in the Capital eight months ago, told *Gulf News* he was at his wit's end.

"I had been carrying Dh125 in my wallet when it was stolen. For someone like me who earns Dh600 a month, losing this money is a big deal.

"More importantly, I was worried because I had lost my medical insurance card, my Emirates ID and a number of important documents," he said.

Luckily for M.A., Abdul Qudoos, a 20-year-old university student, found his wallet on the pavement later that day and contacted him.

"He said he found a remittance receipt in my wallet which had my mobile number on it, and called me. When I went to collect my wallet, the cash was gone but thankfully all my other documents were still there. I was also very relieved that I had managed to send my savings of Dh2,900 home before my wallet was stolen," M.A. said.

M.A. appeared to be one among many victims of pickpockets who have been targeting commuters at bus stops in the Capital. Abdul Qudoos, who found M.A.'s wallet, told *Gulf News* there were four other wallets lying around the Muroor Road bus stop opposite Lifeline Hospital. "I was walking around with a friend at about 11.30pm on a Friday in November and we came across M.A.'s wallet. Even though it had no cash, we thought someone may have lost it because there was a valid labour card inside. So we found a receipt with a mobile number and got in touch with the owner," said Abdul Qudoos, whose name has been changed to protect his identity.

Abdul Qudoos also claimed that four other men had approached them to see if the wallet was theirs while he and his friend were looking for a way to contact the first wallet's owner.

Frantic

"These men claimed to be looking for their wallets too. Two of them said their wallets had been stolen while they were waiting at the bus stop a week ago. They also pointed out another man who told us he had lost Dh4,000 in a similar incident. The men were frantic, especially about losing all their ID papers," Abdul Qudoos said. The university student explained that since they could not find any way to contact the owners of the other wallets, he and his friend left them behind.

Abu Dhabi Police said such cases of theft at bus stops were limited in number.

"We receive only about one or two reports a month, so such thefts do not occur on a daily basis," Colonel Maktoum Ali Al Sharifi, director of the Capital police Directorate, said.

"The investigation department and the organised crime section also monitors buses and bus stops to limit such incidents and all offenders will be promptly arrested," he added.

Emergency: Dial police

Call 999 to report thefts to the Abu Dhabi Police, or approach the nearest police station.

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