



# CRIME -

## NOT SO PETTY

### Aslam Seedat totals the crime statistics in Grahamstown

**C**rime statistics released by the South African Police Service last month tend to indicate that Grahamstown has contributed to the overall decrease in the incidence of crime in the province since last year.

The SAPS report, a record of crime according to both category and area from March 2008 to April 2009, with comparisons from previous years, does however present an interesting case in so far as petty theft and robbery is concerned.

The statistics seem to reveal that crime in the area, as reported by the Grahamstown Police Precinct, has in general been marginally reduced with incidences of residential- and property-related crime, however, remaining relatively high.

Occurrences of robbery with aggravating circumstances, for example, have increased from 144 last year to 186 this year. Stock theft has also increased from 59 to 94 occurrences. The rate of common robbery, on the other hand, has decreased from 179 to 150. Burglary at residential premises have decreased as well with reported break-ins this year numbering 917 as opposed to 976 at the end of April last year.

Despite this relative drop in break-ins in residential suburbs, Grahamstown is one of the highest contributors to the incidence of residential burglaries in the province, rivalled only by the areas of Kabega Park and Walmer in Port Elizabeth.

Particularly worrying is the fact that, while the number of robberies has decreased, the incidences of these

robberies being heavily aggravated to a point that it becomes viewed as a serious crime has increased from two occurrences to 26 in the past year.

Globally, South Africa is ranked fourth in the highest incidence of robbery per capita and while the Eastern Cape doesn't feature prominently as a province in the frequency of robbery, Grahamstown represents a hot-spot in the country when it comes to this specific category of crime.

The statistics released by the SAPS are by no means a true reflection of crime in Grahamstown or the country for that matter, with many incidences such as theft and petty crime not reported to the police or not recorded correctly. The statistics do however point to the frequency of specific crimes in the area and might be useful in explaining how residents in the area are affected by the psyche of crime.

