

Car theft syndicate arrests breakthrough

BHAVNA SOOKHA

FOLLOWING a month of intensive observations, Gateway shopping centre's security made a breakthrough when they arrested two men in their parkade.

Lisa Sukdev, spokeswoman for the centre, said the men were arrested at 4pm on Tuesday after they broke into a rented vehicle which was parked in one of the centre parkades.

"For about a month the security staff have been carrying out observations in our various parkades," she said. "The syndicate was seen for about two hours and were observed communicating via cellphones."

Sukdev said the men were "monitoring" rental vehicles which were entering the premises.

She said once a vehicle was "chosen", one of the men then called another member, who arrived using their own vehicle.

"The men arrived with a vehicle and parked alongside the targeted vehicle. A passenger got out



LISA SUKDEV

the vehicle and used an object to break the targeted vehicle's window," she said.

Once the window was broken, one of the men then used his arm and tried to pull the back seat forward, attempting to gain entry into the boot.

"The man did not manage to gain entry to the boot. He then got back into his vehicle and attempted to leave the premises," said Sukdev. "The suspects were intercepted at the exit of the parkade

and were arrested by Gateway Security and the centre's Crime Prevention Team."

Sukdev said their security team worked closely with the police and they had established that there was a trend emerging where rental vehicles were being targeted – which was why the observation team was put in place.

Sukdev also said that rental vehicles were targeted as these were used by businessmen and women who generally had laptops and other valuables with them.

She said there had been four reports at the centre in the last month alone which had "sparked their concern".

She said that observations would continue despite the two arrests, as they "were committed to ensuring the safety of our shoppers and guests".

Capt Victor Padaychi, from the Durban North police station, confirmed that two men were arrested. "The matter is currently under investigation," he said.