

Dubai puts new drug regulations in place

Major General Abdul Jaleel Al Mahdi, Director of the General Department of Combating Narcotics at the Dubai Police told Gulf News that the increase in reports about passengers carrying medical pills without a prescription got them to change the earlier regulation.

- By Siham Al Najami, Staff Reporter
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Dubai: Dubai Police has recently changed their inspection regulations for passengers arriving to Dubai International Airport with medical pills, said a top police official.

Major General Abdul Jaleel Al Mahdi, Director of the General Department of Combating Narcotics at the Dubai Police told Gulf News that the increase in reports about passengers carrying medical pills without a prescription got them to change the earlier regulation.

"I agree the previous regulation was somehow strict whereby passengers were extensively interrogated and in extremely few cases detained till the substance is examined," said Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Saleh Al Kawari, Deputy Director of the General Department of Combating Narcotics at Dubai Police.

"Now if the pills are not clear to us or do not include a prescription, then we hold the passengers' passport till they provide evidence and for us to examine the substance, which only takes less than couple of days."

This regulation, according to him, has been implemented in the past couple of months.

"The inspection is not only on medical pills but also substances used with tobacco that we examine," said Al Mahdi.

"People tend to argue that people having or possessing marijuana should not be criminalised but addiction starts step by step and we ensure to curb every possible way to smuggle or using drugs."

According to him, there has been an increase of 11.3 per cent of people arrested in drug related cases compared to 2008. In 2009, 1,483 people were detained while in 2008 it was 1,332.

However, the number of cases has dropped by 4.8 per cent last year compared to 2008. In 2009 it reached around 1,049 cases whereas in 2008 it was 1,102.

The amount of drugs seized by the department increased to 36.8 per cent in 2009 with more than 408 kilogrammes and 584 grams of drugs confiscated.

In 2008, the amount was more than 298 kilogrammes and 725 grammes of seized drugs.

In 2009, 437 individuals were arrested for addiction and using drugs in 345 cases while it was 373 individuals in 291 cases for 2008.

Of the people arrested in drug related cases in 2009, 49 were dealers in 32 cases while they were 36 individuals in 25 cases for 2008; 234 were traffickers in 102 cases compared to only 69 individuals in 41 cases for 2008; 473 smugglers; 269 possessors; and 17 importers of drugs.

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