

Forger scammed banks in credit card fraud scheme

Con artist will have to serve 56 months for crime spree.

- By Bassam Za'za.Senior Reporter
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Dubai: A Tunisian employee has been jailed for 56 months after a court on Sunday convicted him of defrauding five banks using 86 credit cards, the total limit of which reached Dh2.5 million.

The Dubai Court of First Instance sentenced the 34-year-old accused to four and a half years in jail after Presiding Judge Fahmi Mounir incriminated him on nine counts of forgery. The sentence amounts to six months for every forgery he committed.

The accused, S.T., will be deported after the completion of his jail term.

"No... I didn't do it. Not guilty. It didn't happen. That's untrue. Impossible," argued S.T. when he denied each of the 149 charges which were levelled against him in court.

Prosecutors accused S.T. of abusing his former job as a data entry operator at the Dubai Department of Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities, forging 31 labour cards, seven salary certificates and a number of passports in different names.

Forged documents

He produced the forged documents at five banks to obtain 86 credit cards, the limit of which varied between Dh20,000 and Dh40,000.

Prosecutors accused him of forging signatures on tens of guarantee cheques, worth nearly Dh1 million, to persuade the banks to issue him the credit cards.

"I didn't forge a single document... none of the banks presented any corroborated evidence against me," he contended.

The crimes were committed between March 2005 and May 2009.

An Emirati police officer testified to prosecutors that the 86 credit cards were seized in S.T.'s house along with money transfer receipts, forged passports and labour cards bearing names of bogus Syrian, Iraqi, Tunisian and Algerian individuals, and salary transfer certificates.

According to the charge sheet, S.T. embezzled public money, forged official and unofficial documents and used them. He also used the department's stamp on the forged salary certificates. The police officer stated: "Preliminary interrogations revealed that the former data entry operator had been involved in the forgery... we raided his flat in Sharjah and seized many forged documents and credit cards and pin numbers."

Sting

S.T. was arrested in a sting operation.

"When I questioned him, S.T. claimed that he transferred between Dh150,000 and Dh200,000 to his parents. He said the limit for each of the 86 credit cards varied between Dh20,000 and Dh40,000... he also confessed that he paid a monthly 5 per cent minimum limit so that the banks would not freeze the cards," the officer said.

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