

# More than 7,000 involved in Riyadh drug crimes

Patrol squads have raided five dens and confiscated illegal drugs and arrested more than 7,000 suspects

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Riyadh: Saudi Police have arrested 7,213 people in Riyadh last year for crimes related to drugs, according to a report by the Riyadh Police Department.

The report said 12,491 narcotic pills, 1,434 hashish-filled cigarettes, 20 grams of heroin and 2,296 bundles of narcotic qat were seized by squads.

Patrol squads have raided five dens and confiscated 48 barrels of alcohol, 3,332 bottles of locally-brewed alcohol and 359 bottles of imported alcohol.

“In all, 106,658 people involved in different crimes, including 6,109 wanted men, have been arrested,” the report said.

Some 1,048 people were arrested for carrying 750 pieces of unlicensed ammunition, 14,843 live ammunition and 376 knives.

The report comes four months after the Saudi interior ministry arrested a narcotic gang possessing 9 million of captagon pills, six tonnes of hashish and 10 kilos of heroin.

The ministry at that time said it has arrested 210 people involved in drug trafficking operations worth 330 million Saudi riyals.

Of the 210 people arrested, 133 are Saudis and the rest are expatriates, including 31 Pakistanis, 21 Yemenis, 18 Syrians, 11 Filipinos, 5 Egyptians, 3 Ethiopians, 2 Eritreans and one each from Sudan, Kuwait and Jordan.

Lt. General Mansour Al Turki, Interior ministry spokesman, was quoted earlier as saying that drug traffickers and bootleggers see Saudi Arabia as a lucrative market as they want to generate high and quick income due to the high costs of these banned substances.

Despite strict measures in force, there is an increasing number of drug trafficking and smuggling incidents.

For instance, it was reported on Sunday that a policeman in Najran prison has admitted taking 40,000 riyals in bribe for letting 1,055 in captagon pills and 200 grams of hashish into the prison. The drug was intended to be sold to prisoners.

Drug trafficking carries the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

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