

Two arrested in Abu Dhabi over counterfeit currency

Suspects caught trying to sell fakes worth equivalent of \$14 million

- By Iman Sherif, Staff Reporter
- Published: 00:00 December 6, 2010



Abu Dhabi: Police arrested an accountant and a merchant as they attempted to sell counterfeit US currency worth the equivalent of \$14 million (Dh51.4 million).

As it turned out, the dollar bills the suspects were offering at a low price were merely wads of ordinary paper cut in the same size as dollar banknotes printed in black ink.

The suspects also claimed that black and white patterns on the surface of the notes were merely colours to facilitate chemical analysis and could be removed completely.

"The forensic laboratory confirmed that the confiscated currency was either counterfeit US money or simply painted paper cut in the same size," said Colonel Ali Saeed Al Nuaimi, Deputy Director of Criminal Investigation at Abu Dhabi Police.

During investigation each suspect accused the other of masterminding the operation.

Colonel Al Nuaimi confirmed that the case was of a very serious nature. He said that, immediately after receiving a report, investigating officers worked out a plan of action to apprehend the suspects.

The probe was initiated after G.F., 49, an accountant, attempted to sell counterfeit currency to an undercover agent. After striking up an acquaintance, the accused agreed to pass on \$4 million worth of bank-notes for only Dh250,000.

Upon agreeing on the time and place to conclude the deal, the accused sought to narrow the deal to \$2 million in return for Dh100,000, saying he needed to test the seriousness of the buyer.

Colonel Dr Rashid Bu Rashid, Director of Organised Crime at Abu Dhabi Police, said: "The accused was arrested during Eid Al Adha. In his possession, police found the tools he used to make the counterfeit money, along with \$100,000 in cash. He claimed that he could chemically wash the black ink which would then make the money real. The operation was dubbed "black dollars storm".

The accused claimed that his Arab partner, A.M.A, 40, was the brain behind the racket, and contended that he was not aware that he was engaged in an illegal activity.

Large stash

The second accused was kept under surveillance and was arrested by Abu Dhabi police en route to Al Ain. The police searched his residence and found a large stash of counterfeit dollar bills.

When questioned, he said that the money belonged to G.F., and that he was only keeping it at his house as a favour.

Colonel Dr. Bu Rashid warned that those engaging in such crimes would face the full force of the law so that innocent people would not be victimised.

"Using counterfeit money has a serious impact on the national economy. In addition to severe fines the penalty for such crimes can be up to 15 years in jail," said Lieutenant Colonel Dr Salah Al Ghoul, Director of the Law Respect Culture Bureau.

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