

Dubai Police officers put to test in fake robbery act

The entire operation will be used as study material, in workshops, for shop owners to get familiar with security loopholes.

- By Siham Al Najami, Staff Reporter
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Dubai: It was the perfect armed robbery — very early in the morning while the streets of Naif were still silent. Store owners were just about to open shop when three masked suspects threatened a shop employee with a hand gun.

Within less than two minutes, two of the suspects had stolen jewellery worth more than Dh5 million from the shop. And thus began the first armed robbery drill by the Crime Prevention Department of Dubai Police.

"No one from the police force knew about the drill except a specialised evaluating team and the shop employee.

"We wanted to evaluate the performance of the officers and observe the public's reaction and cooperation with the police," Lieutenant Colonel Ahmad Bin Galita, director of the department, said.

The entire operation will be used as study material, in workshops, for shop owners to get familiar with security loopholes.

Additionally, it throws light on how people react under stress and danger, Bin Galita said.

Drawbacks

Since the shop owner had panicked and didn't hit the alarm button, an evaluator from the team had called the operations room.

"That was one of the drawbacks that we registered. The shop employee should have reacted in a better way," Bin Galita said.

A while later, the suspects removed their masks and got into a car. Within minutes police patrol units in the area had rushed to the scene. A large crowd, realising that a robbery had taken place, had already collected in the area.

Bin Galita noted that this was another drawback in crime scenes as it can possibly damage crucial evidence.

"The investigating officers were able to determine that the robbery was a planned one since the location of the store was known.

"They questioned eyewitnesses and immediately sent orders to monitor the entire surrounding areas and roads," Bin Galita said, adding that at this stage the patrol units and investigators didn't know that the robbery was fake.

Within six minutes a police patrol unit had traced the car based on the description of eyewitnesses. All three 'suspects' were arrested.

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