

Fraud bid duo appear in court

Official denies defendants have been acquitted.

- By Samihah Zaman, Staff Reporter
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Abu Dhabi: Two of the three men charged with trying to steal Dh52.96 billion from the Central Bank, appeared before the Abu Dhabi Criminal Court of First Instance yesterday.

The hearing was adjourned till November 22 by Chief Justice Sayeed Abdul Bashir, head of the criminal justice section at the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department, without any statements being made by either of the defendants, E.H.K. or N.A.B., or their defence lawyers.

A third man charged in the fraud case, Farzeen Ali Karoyan Mutlaq — accused of being the mastermind behind the alleged fraud attempt — is still at large. All three defendants are of Iranian origin.

After E.H.K., 47, and N.A.B., 47, were arrested earlier this year, Abu Dhabi Police said that Mutlaq was a gang leader who was wanted internationally by Interpol.

Contrary to reports in the press the defendants have not been acquitted.

An official of Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) had denied a news published in a section of press yesterday that defendants in the case were acquitted. "The ADJD will initiate a legal action against publishers of this false and baseless news story," the official said.

Police said the men were foiled in their alleged fraud attempt when N.A.B. and E.H.K. presented forged papers to the Central Bank in April and claimed that Mutlaq owned investments in properties worth \$14.4 billion (Dh52.8 billion) and \$400 million. The sum was transferred from Germany to Iran through the UAE's Central Bank, according to the Abu Dhabi Police.

Tourist village

E.H.K. also had power of attorney authorising him to receive the sum and transfer it to Mutlaq, police said. At an earlier hearing, E.H.K. told the court that he had wanted to build a tourist village in Iran and that Mutlaq had approached him as an investor. E.H.K. said that when he was arrested, he said he had received the documents that were submitted to the bank by Mutlaq in their home country, but had not known that they were forged.

N.A.B. denied the accusations against him and claimed he had only acted as a translator for EHK.

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