

Jobseeker jailed a month for forgery

Convicted man claims he forgot the degree in question was in his possession

- By Bassam Za'za', Senior Reporter
- Published: 00:00 February 17, 2010



Dubai: A jobseeker, who was found to have been using a forged college degree bearing stamps of the UAE Embassy in Pakistan during a job-hunting visit to Dubai, was jailed on Tuesday.

The Dubai Court of First Instance handed the 36-year-old Pakistani accused a one-month sentence after the jury found him guilty of forging two government stamps.

The 36-year-old Pakistani claimed before Presiding Judge Al Saeed Mohammad Barghout that when he was stopped at Dubai International Airport he had forgotten about the degree in his bag.

"I am not guilty. I didn't forge the stamps. When I was stopped at the airport, the degree had been in my bag [for] five years," contended the accused, A.S., when he defended himself.

Prosecutors accused A.S. of attempting to bring the forged degree into the country. He was charged with forging a Dh50-stamp and the stamp of the UAE Embassy in Islamabad.

An Emirati customs inspector thwarted A.S.'s attempt to bring the degree into the country and use it. The inspector said in his statement: "I took the defendant to the search room after suspecting him. When I opened one of his bags, I found the degree written in English. The degree bore the embassy's stamp and I realised that it was forged because it had holes in it. The certificate also carried a second stamp, but which didn't have holes. Immediately I referred him to the airport police.

'Frightened'

"The accused claimed to me that he bought the degree for Rs10,000 (Dh426) ... I assumed that he was aware the degree was forged, because he claimed he bought it from his compatriot without issuing it from the concerned authorities." The inspector testified that the suspect told him he bought the degree so he could find a job in the UAE.

"At first he seemed normal, but when I discovered the degree, he became frightened," the inspector said.

The defendant told prosecutors that a suspect named Imtiaz stamped the degree. The forensic report confirmed the two stamps were forged.

Yesterday's judgment is still subject to appeal within 15 days.

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