

190 held in Dubai Police’s global drug crackdown

Collaborative international efforts led to major busts over three years, says police chief

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Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, has praised the role of the police in combating narcotics locally and internationally. Through the exchange of 653 crucial pieces of information with police departments across 43 countries, significant progress has been made.

On the eve of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, it has been revealed that this collaborative endeavour resulted in the arrest of 190 suspects involved in drug-related activities. Equally impressive was the successful seizure of 15 tonnes and 291 kg of illicit drugs. The Dubai Police statistics highlight a noteworthy increase in apprehensions of drug and psychotropic substance traffickers, with a surge of 36.2 per cent in the past year. There has been a notable rise of 33.3 per cent in the number of arrests related to drug promoters in 2022, along with a 20.3 per cent increase in the successful detection of drug users.

Awareness campaigns

Lieutenant General Al Marri also emphasised the pivotal role played by the Hemaya International Centre, which operates under the General Department of Anti-Narcotics, in educating young individuals about the dangers of drug abuse and psychotropic substances. Hemaya conducted awareness campaigns in 210 government and private schools, delivering lectures to 79,716 students.

They also organised sports activities for 9,262 students and military activities for 10,444 students.

The impact of the centre extended beyond schools, with more than 50,000 individuals benefiting from community field events, 37,418 from informative lectures, 10,947 from educational workshops, and an impressive 9,416,881 from the Centre’s publications.



Over 15 tonnes of illicit drugs have been seized in joint operations.— FILE PHOTO

AlNeyadi’s space message: Join forces against drug abuse

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UAE astronaut Sultan AlNeyadi, from space, has delivered a crucial message about fighting drug abuse. In a video shared by Dubai Police on Twitter, AlNeyadi expressed his concern about the severe and destructive impact of drug abuse on individuals and communities.

Standing at the observatory deck of the International Space Station, AlNeyadi compared drug abuse to a malignant cancer that devastates societies. It has the potential to cause long-lasting adverse effects on individuals, families, and society as a whole.



Sultan AlNeyadi. — AP

AlNeyadi emphasised the importance of collective action and unity in addressing this issue. On the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse,

celebrated on June 26, AlNeyadi highlighted that combating drugs is not just a duty but a national responsibility. He urged residents to join Dubai Police’s campaign against drug abuse through the Ministry of Interior’s initiative #jointopreventit.

June 26 was designated as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking by the UN General Assembly on December 7, 1987.

The Dubai Police General Command is committed to participating in endeavours to combat drug abuse and enhance public awareness, with a focus on educating the youth about the perils of drugs and effective preventive measures against addiction.

Over 2,600 drug smuggling bids foiled

Dubai Customs announced a significant achievement in combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking on the occasion of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Over the past three years, they have prevented more than 2,600 drug smuggling attempts, reflecting their commitment to fighting the trafficking of prohibited substances. This achievement aligns with Dubai Customs’ vision of being a leading secure customs authority globally, contributing to local, regional, and global security. The UAE’s security stability attracts investments, ensures societal safety, and consolidates its reputation as one of the safest countries. The number of drug seizures were: 829 in 2020, 941 in 2021, and 834 in 2022.

Ahmed Mahboub Musabih, Director-General of Dubai Customs, emphasised the organisation’s expertise in combating drug abuse. Dubai Customs plays a key role in supporting the efforts of the Drug Control Council in the UAE and prioritises safeguarding society from the perils of prohibited substances.

Dubai is a global example in effectively combating drug-related dangers. Dubai Customs proactively enhances the skills of customs officers and adheres to the highest inspection standards. Customs officers diligently fulfill their patriotic responsibility by preventing the smuggling of hazardous substances.

Dubai Customs provides specialised training programs to equip customs inspectors with comprehensive knowledge and interpretation skills.

Adel Al-Suwaidi, Director of Technical Support at Dubai Customs, highlighted the department’s commitment to sustainable investments in advanced inspection systems.

Recently, Dubai Customs introduced a groundbreaking X-ray scanning technology at Jebel Ali Customs Centre and TECOM.

This system, known as the “Si-yaj Buggy,” strengthens Dubai Customs’ overall inspection framework with high-resolution imaging and a control range of up to 30 meters.

The Customs K9 Unit also plays a vital role in supporting customs centers across land, sea, and air operations.

Dubai Customs’ Inspection Sector has achieved remarkable seizures over the past three years at all entry points in Dubai. Notable seizures include 36.76 kilograms of marijuana intercepted at the airport and 75,000 Captagon tablets seized at the land border crossing.

Rashid Al Dhabbah Al Suwaidi, Acting Director of Sea Customs Management, highlighted significant seizures made by Dubai Customs in their relentless efforts against drug trafficking. Operations resulted in the seizure of 3 million Captagon tablets and 1.5 tonnes of Captagon powder.

In an operation called ‘Operation Sul’, inspectors discovered over 1.59 million concealed Captagon tablets hidden within the hulls of two wooden vessels, challenging inspectors and the Customs K9 Unit due to the clever concealment using hull coatings. — WAM



Bank of Baroda@50 Thriving on customer-centric service



Nishant Ranjan, chief executive of GCC operations at Bank of Baroda shares insights into the bank’s journey, emphasising its customer-centric approach and plans for digital growth as the bank celebrates its 50th anniversary, embodying adaptability, efficiency, and innovation



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Bank of Baroda, the only Indian bank in the UAE with full-fledged banking operations, is marking half a century of its overarching presence in the Emirates as a lender with an exemplary track record for adaptability, efficiency and innovation. For the expatriate and local business communities, the bank with an enviable 115-year legacy has made its mark as a lender of choice and a reliable partner in their progress and prosperity.

Nishant Ranjan, chief executive of GCC operations at Bank of Baroda, opens up about the bank’s eventful journey and evolution since 1974 when it opened its first UAE branch in Dubai. He envisions the bank’s next phase of growth in the fast-evolving digital banking ecosystem to stay future-ready while aligning with the changing needs of customers in a transforming business landscape.

As Bank of Baroda UAE celebrates its 50th anniversary, how do you recount the journey as well as the key milestones and achievements that have contributed to the bank’s enduring success in forging a thriving partnership with the business community and staying customer-centric?

It is indeed a momentous occasion for our bank as we are celebrating the golden jubilee year of our presence in the UAE. Bank of Baroda established its presence in the UAE with the opening of its branch in Dubai on June 25, 1974. The branch was inaugurated in the August presence of the Late His Highness Sheikh

Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum (may Allah bless his soul). The bank opened its second UAE branch in Abu Dhabi on July 23, 1974, followed by opening more branches, Electronic Banking Service Units (EBSUs) and ATMs subsequently. Today, Bank of Baroda is the only Indian bank in the UAE with a full-fledged banking operations licence and has a wide network comprising five branches across Dubai, Deira, Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Ras Al Khaimah, 45 ATMs, nine EBSUs in Bur Dubai (Dubai), Sheikh Zayed Road (Dubai), DMCC, Al Mas Tower (Dubai), Al Qusais (Dubai), Mussafah (Abu Dhabi), Shabiya (Abu Dhabi), National Paints (Sharjah), Hamriyah Free Zone (Sharjah) and RAKIA (Ras Al Khaimah) marking 50th year of our glorious banking presence in UAE.

We are also pleased to inform you that our bank has recently been featured in the Forbes-Statista World’s Best Banks 2023. We sincerely believe that our inclusion in this eminent list is a public acknowledgement of our bank’s continuous endeavour for excellence as well as a testament to the trust imposed on us by our valuable customers. We also take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to the citizens and the leaders of the UAE for their invaluable support and trust.

How did the bank evolve over the past five decades and manage to stay relevant to align with the changing needs and habits of customers?

Bank of Baroda has always endeavoured to transform itself in line with the change in customer preferences. Mobile banking and internet banking have emerged as the preferred modes for most of our



customers to transact with the bank. Our mobile banking application (M-Connect Plus), as well as internet banking (Baroda Connect), is being upgraded with new features regularly to enhance the banking experience for our customers. We are focused on being customer-centric and offering a personalised experience through multiple channels and platforms. Through our 24x7 toll-free number 800-BARODA (227632), customers can avail of a range of banking services on a real-time basis without visiting the branches physically. We remain committed to providing our customers with innovative and competitive banking solutions to support the economic growth and development of the country while maintaining a strong focus on compliance and risk management. The bank has also recently obtained PCI-DSS certification for ATM acquiring and debit card operations in the UAE. We endeavour to embark on a transformation journey under various streams with a focus on digitisation and centralisation to improve productivity and customer experience.

How do you envision your transformative growth in the digital era? How do you plan to further strengthen your bank’s relationship with the Indian diaspora and the local community while maintaining the bank’s position as a top-ranking lender in the UAE?

At Bank of Baroda, UAE, it has been our strong endeavour to not only address the banking and financial needs of the Indian diaspora as well as the local community but also to develop a synergy between Indian business people and the local

establishments. This is in line with our objective of being a top-ranking bank in the UAE committed to augmenting stakeholders’ value through concern, care and competence. With our utmost emphasis on business transformation encompassing people, processes, products and technology, we provide a wide range of services to our customers such as internet banking, mobile banking, online remittance, rapid funds to India, cash on mobile etc. Further, we also deeply value the growing aspirations of individuals and the business community in the UAE and to cater to their evolving needs, the bank has established a large bouquet of products such as retail lending, SME and corporate finance, syndicated loans, trade finance and treasury products to provide the entire gamut of services to its customers under one roof.

What specialised services and products does Bank of Baroda UAE offer to its NRI customers and how does the bank reinvent itself to cater to their digital-era banking needs?

We take immense pride in the tremendous support and enormous faith reposed in us by our NRI customers in the bank’s glorious journey to date and to address their various banking needs we offer a wide range of products and services ranging from digital banking (e-statement, net banking, mobile banking), personalised debit cards aided with green pin generation facility through mobile banking application; remittance services with attractive rates; attractive interest under our various deposit schemes such as NRE Term Deposit (one to 10 years), Rupee Linked Foreign Currency Deposit (one to



three years) and FCNR (B) deposit (one year to five years) and Non-Callable Term Deposit scheme for a period (one year to 10 years); retail advances facilities such as housing loan, mortgage loan, car loan etc; complimentary services through PSB alliance doorstep banking to the parents, grandparents of our NRI customers who are maintaining a specific balance in their NRE/NRO saving accounts. In our endeavour to offer personalised and prompt service to our NRI customers, we have a centralised NRI cell, a dedicated NRI desk at all our branches in the UAE. Further, we have also introduced a 24x7 toll-free number 80001830996, for NRI customers based in the UAE. This contact centre is exclusively available for NRI services.

As you have mentioned earlier, your bank was featured in the prestigious Forbes-Statista World’s Best Banks 2023 list. What is the significance of this recognition?

Forbes, in collaboration with market research firm Statista, has recently unveiled the World’s Best Banks List 2023. This comprehensive ranking was determined through a global survey of 48,000 banking customers across 32 countries, conducted in 14 languages. A total of 415 banks—four per cent of those that exist worldwide, reached minimum scores to earn a spot in this list. The shortlisted banks were evaluated in categories such as digital services, customer services, financial advice, and trust. Customers’ overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the bank to others constituted 60 per cent of the final score, while the remaining 40 per cent was based on customer ratings in areas including trust, terms and conditions, digital services, customer services, and financial advice. To be eligible for inclusion, a bank had to receive ratings from a minimum of 250 customers. Forbes, in conjunction with Statista, independently conducted the survey to determine the best banks, including country-specific rankings. Among the 57 banks operating in the UAE, only 10 successfully secured a spot on the final list, with our bank achieving an impressive sixth rank in the UAE.