

Fake certificates gang busted

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VISAKHAPATNAM: The city police busted a fake educational certificate racket and arrested three persons of a four-member gang involved in the sale of fake certificates of various universities as well as the secondary education boards of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh on Saturday.

The Fourth Town police seized 300 fake certificates of universities and secondary education boards, two laptops and computers each, one colour printer, rubber stamps and other material from the arrested persons.

While Chambalam Kotaiah Santosh Kumar (39), Malla Govinda Rao (35) and Chinthada Krishna (28) were arrested on Saturday, the fourth accused Peetani Venkateswara Rao (34) is still absconding. Incidentally, Venkateswara Rao was arrested in 2012 for selling fake educational certificates of various universities and was later released on bail.

The racket was busted after a complaint was lodged by K Srinivas of Arilova area in the city. Srinivas had paid the gang some money for a degree certificate but even four months after paying up when he did not receive the certificate, he approached the police.

Deputy commissioner of police (Law and Order) P Viswa Prasad told news persons here on Saturday that the prime accused in the case, Santosh Kumar, a native of Kerala who had settled down in the city, first started a bogus educational institution named Sree Academy at Lalithanagar in 2011. His friend Peetani Venkateswara Rao also started a bogus academy Venkat Academy at Dondaparthi in the city the same year.

Both of them lured gullible unemployed youth and students seeking employment in the private sector in the country as well as overseas markets Singapore and Dubai. They issued SSC, intermediate, graduation and post graduation certificates, including MSc, MCA, MTech and MBA diplomas and degrees of various universities and state education boards. With the help of Malla Govinda Rao and Chinthada Krishna, Rao and Kumar used to print the certificates and issued around 118 fake certificates in the city.

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The gang used to sell each certificate for Rs 12,000 to Rs 30,000 depending upon the demand and the course. According to the police, the accused used to log into websites of various universities and institutes and download copies of the provisional and original certificates. Later, they

used to scan and forge the signatures of the authorities of various educational institutions.

The three culprits were arrested after policemen in plain clothes approached the gang for certificates and caught them red handed. A manhunt has been launched for the absconding person.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/visakhapatnam/Fake-certificates-gang-busted/articleshow/22592867.cms>