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Rajasthan Police Publicly Parade Fraud Accused in Merta

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Merta, Rajasthan, In a striking display of public punishment, police in Merta town, Nagaur district, paraded three men accused of fraud through the streets on Friday, dressed in women's salwar suits with their heads shaved. The accused, hands folded, repeatedly chanted, "We made a mistake," as onlookers filmed the spectacle on their mobile phones.

According to police, the trio allegedly swindled an elderly man out of ₹2 lakh using a lottery scam. Disguised in women's clothing, they approached the victim, claiming he had won ₹4.5 lakh. The man reportedly borrowed funds to claim the supposed prize, handing over ₹2 lakh in cash before the suspects fled on a motorcycle.

Authorities tracked the accused soon after, finding them still in the same clothing used during the alleged fraud. In an unusual move, officers decided to march them through town as they had been caught still in disguise, escorted from the local bus stand to the courthouse.

The police stated that the parade was intended as a deterrent against similar financial crimes, particularly those targeting vulnerable citizens. "Public awareness is essential in preventing such scams. This sends a clear message that such acts will face swift consequences," said a senior officer from the local police station.

The parade, however, has drawn mixed reactions. While some residents praised the police's hard stance, others questioned whether the public humiliation was appropriate before a legal conviction. Critics argue that such actions may infringe on the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" and could amount to extrajudicial punishment.

Legal experts note that while Indian law permits police to conduct crime awareness campaigns, publicly parading suspects in this manner may raise human rights concerns. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which courts have interpreted to include protection from degrading treatment.

In recent years, the Rajasthan Police have adopted more public-facing methods to combat organized and financial crimes. Similar parades have been conducted in cases involving theft, robbery, and cybercrime. Authorities claim these measures are part of a broader crime-prevention strategy aimed at curbing repeat offenses and educating the public about common scams.

The accused in this case are expected to face charges under sections of the Indian Penal Code relating to cheating and impersonation. The police confirmed that the investigation is ongoing and that all procedural steps required for the trial will be followed.

The incident has also sparked a wider conversation on balancing crime deterrence with the protection of individual rights. As the case proceeds in court, it remains to be seen whether

the public shaming tactic will draw formal legal scrutiny or continue as an accepted policing practice in parts of Rajasthan.