The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Souvenir World Cup Banknote Runs Short With Popular Demand

By Reuters

June 20, 2018



Sergei Karpukhin / Reuters

Distrusted at first by some as dodgy cash, a special World Cup 100-ruble ($1.57) banknote with a picture of iconic Soviet goalkeeper Lev Yashin has become a collectors' item, with Russians willing to pay several times its face value to get their hands on it.

Tinted in hues of blue, yellow and green, the note features a boy dressed in a football jersey and holding a ball as he watches a diving Yashin – an image that is meant to symbolize the appeal of football across generations.

Before the tournament got under way last week, some traders in Yekaterinburg were reluctant to accept the unfamiliar polymer notes, which came into circulation less than a month ago.

Now, demand has gone through the roof.

Related article: Russia Sets Record for Millionaires, Report Finds

"We've run out of them. We were told we may get more but we're not 100 percent sure. We're still waiting," said Marina Gorbunova, a bank teller at the cavernous Sberbank branch in central Yekaterinburg.

Another bank employee, Dmitry, said more than 300 people, mostly Russians, had queued up on Saturday to obtain the limited-edition notes.

On the other side of the note are names of the 11 host cities and a ball with a map of Russia on it. Under ultra-violet light, the words 'FIFA World Championship 2018 in Russia' and the tournament logo can be seen.

On the popular auction website avito.ru on Wednesday, the Yashin notes were typically being offered for 300 rubles or more.

A local coin seller said he had none available but that they were going for six times face value in smaller kiosks, while some fans had paid up to 900 rubles in nearby Vaynera Street. Chinese collectors, he added, were particularly keen.

Sergei Utkin, a local collector, is bemused by the mad rush for the note. "I've got two of them and that's enough," he said. "Why would anyone need any more?"

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/06/20/souvenir-world-cup-banknote-runs-short-with-popular-demand-a61930