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Macau police bust prostitution ring, arresting 26, incl 3 active-duty and 2 ex-cops

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The Judiciary Police (PJ) busted a prostitution ring and arrested 26 people on Thursday, including three active-duty officers of the Public Security Police (PSP) and two retired PJ officers, PJ spokesman Ho Ka Weng announced during a special press conference at PJ headquarters on Friday morning.

According to a PJ statement released after the press conference on Friday afternoon, the 26 suspects comprise 18 local residents, six from the Chinese mainland and two from Hong Kong, aged between 39 and 68. The group includes 24 men and two women.

The statement also noted that the suspects include three PSP officers, aged between 51 and 60, surnamed Chan, Sou and Leong, and two retired male PJ officers surnamed Kam and Ieong, aged 58 and 65, respectively.

Meanwhile, the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) announced in a statement yesterday evening that the three PSP officers involved in the case, include a PSP deputy commissioner surnamed Leong, and an acting division chief surnamed Sou.

Ho revealed during Friday's press conference that the Judiciary Police received intelligence in 2019 indicating that a criminal syndicate was engaging in prostitution activities under the guise of operating saunas.

“Sauna” is a customary euphemism in Macau for venues that offer commercial sex.

Following several years of in-depth investigation, Ho added, PJ officers discovered that three saunas were under the control of three separate criminal organisations. Ho said that the saunas offered services such as “spa treatments” and different kinds of “massage” as a cover, while they arranged for women to provide sexual services.

A price list displayed at the press conference capped the highest “massage” price at 8,899 patacas.

Ho noted that the price per session ranged from approximately 2,000 to 8,000 patacas, with the women involved earning between 1,000 and 2,000 patacas per session. On their price lists, the saunas listed “ratings” and “standards” based on the women's nationalities – recruited from Asia and Eastern Europe – and the kinds of service provided.

Ho also said that, in addition to the core suspects, a total of 381 people were taken to police stations for questioning during the operation.



PJ officers also seized a raft of account books, price lists, and a large quantity of sex-work paraphernalia during the raids, including pink S&M* implements displayed during the press conference.

Ho pointed out that during the investigation, the criminal syndicates demonstrated a high level of counter-surveillance awareness due to the involvement of police personnel. Whenever the implicated law enforcement officers – both those still on active duty and those already retired – received news of upcoming inspections or became aware that an investigation involved any of the three saunas, they would tip off the syndicates via secret communication methods to help conceal their criminal activities, Ho said.

In return, according to the press conference, the five current and former law enforcement officers regularly accepted bribes. The three criminal syndicates each paid bribes totalling about 150,000 to 200,000 patacas per month to the three implicated PSP officers, Ho said, adding that the two retired PJ officers each received no less than 140,000 patacas in bribes every month.

The three criminal syndicates had been operating since 2019, Ho said, adding that their total illegal proceeds are estimated to amount to 240 million, 230 million and 320 million patacas, respectively – totalling 790 million patacas.

The Judiciary Police took action on Thursday, raiding the three saunas, five offices, and 23 other locations linked to the case. A large quantity of operational items was seized, including condoms, lubricants, account books, computers and price lists for sexual services. A total of about 50 million patacas in cash was seized.

The 26 suspects were transferred to the Public Prosecutions Office (MP) on Friday, facing charges including organised crime, bribe-taking, exploitation of prostitutes, according to the PJ press conference.

12 remanded in custody, 14 released

According to yesterday's MP statement, the 26 suspects have meanwhile been accused of organised crime involvement, money laundering and the crime of "personal favouritism practised by a civil servant" (Article 332 of the Macau Penal Code).

The statement noted 12 suspects have been remanded in custody, including the three suspects from the Public Security Police, a Hong Kong co-owner of one of the saunas, two businessmen from the Chinese mainland and a local housewife

The remaining 14 suspects were released in accordance with legally mandated coercive procedures, including the two retired PJ officers.

On Friday, the Public Security Police said in a statement that the three PSP officers allegedly involved in the case had been preventively suspended from duty and that disciplinary proceedings had been launched immediately.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Police said in a statement on Friday that they would "not tolerate any illegal acts" by their officers, adding that heads of units had been instructed to launch a "full revision of all internal supervision and management mechanisms" in order to "identify gaps" and prevent "the occurrence of similar situations".

**S&M (Sadomasochism) encompasses a wide array of toys, restraints, and implements designed for consensual impact play, sensory deprivation, and bondage. These items are categorised by the sensations and experiences they are meant to create. - Gemini*



Evidence, including a set of S&M (sadism and masochism) props about the case seized by Judiciary Police (PJ) officers on Thursday, is displayed at PJ headquarters in Zape, during Friday's press conference.



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TODAY'S PAPER

Xi says China-DPRK ties stand at new historical starting point

PYONGYANG – Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese president, said yesterday that the relationship between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) stands at a new historical starting point.

Xi made the remarks while attending a welcome banquet hosted by Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and president of the State Affairs of the DPRK.

Xi pointed out that China and the DPRK, linked by mountains and rivers and sharing a common future, have seen their traditional friendship passed down across generations and grow ever stronger over time through the test of the evolving international landscape.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the China-DPRK Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, and the China-DPRK relationship stands at a new historical starting point, Xi said, noting that he has reached important consensus with Kim during his visit.

From the strategic perspective of the future and destiny of socialism, both leaders have agreed to seize the general trend of the times, respond to the shared aspirations of the two peoples, strengthen high-level exchanges, deepen strategic communication, expand practical cooperation, enhance people-to-people bonds, promote the high-level development of China-DPRK relations, jointly open up brighter prospects for the socialist cause of both countries, and contribute to the continuous progress of human society, Xi said.

The successful convening of the Ninth Congress of the WPK this year has made strategic plans and major arrangements for the long-term development of the Party and the country's cause, ushering in a new period of comprehensive development of the DPRK's socialist cause, Xi said.

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Xi Jinping (left), general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and Chinese president, shakes hands with Kim Jong Un, general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and president of the State Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), at the Kumsusan State Guesthouse in Pyongyang yesterday. – Xinhua

Macau's life expectancy reaches 83.5 years in 2025: govt

Tony Wong

The local government said yesterday that Macau residents' average life expectancy reached 83.5 years last year – men at 80.6 years and women at 86.3 years, ranking amongst the highest in the world.

The Macau Government Information Bureau (GCS) made the remarks in a statement on its official WeChat account yesterday.

"Since Macau's return to the motherland, local residents' life expectancy has risen substantially", the statement said.

The statement noted that Macau's average life expectancy was 77.9 years shortly before its return to the motherland. Over the past two-plus decades, the statement said, the figure has seen a substantial increase, outstripping the growth rate of most developed economies, which it said has "directly" been attributed to the local government's increased investment in public health following Macau's return to the motherland, with healthcare expenditure as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) rising from 2.1 percent to 3.8 percent in 2023.

The Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) was established on December 20, 1999, marking Macau's return to the motherland and the end of Portugal's temporary administration of the city.

According to historical data from the Statistics and Census Bureau (DSEC), Macau's official statistics agency, Macau residents' average life expectancy at birth stood at 76.6 years in the 1993-1996 period (the earliest available data on the DSEC online database) and 77.9 years in the 1996-1999 period. The figure had gradually risen to the highest, 84.2 years, in the 2018-2021 period, men at 81.3 years and women at 87.1 years. Afterwards, the figure stood at 83.8 years (2019-2022), 83.1 years (2020-2023), 83.3 years (2021-2024), and 83.5 years (2022-2025).

Yesterday's GCS statement noted that in alignment with the Outline of the Healthy China 2030 Plan, the MSAR government released its Healthy Macau Blueprint in July 2024, integrating health-related aspects into all public policies. Currently, the statement said, Macau has established

a healthcare network comprising "public hospitals + private hospitals + primary health centres". In 2025, the number of registered doctors, nurses, and hospital beds per 1,000 population in Macau reached 3.0, 4.4, and 2.7, respectively, the statement said.

Backed by an extensive primary healthcare network, the statement said, Macau's nine public health centres provide a wide range of services such as vaccinations and chronic disease management, with the coverage rate for routine immunisation vaccines consistently maintained above 98 percent.

Addressing health threats such as hypertension and diabetes, the statement said, Macau has been implementing a programme facilitating full-cycle management for chronic disease patients through the city's network of family doctors. Compared to Hong Kong, which is also a city with a high level of average life expectancy, Macau's mortality rate from cardiovascular diseases is currently 17 percent lower, the statement said.

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Lebanon reports Israeli strikes as Hezbollah claims attacks against troops in south

An Israeli strike hit a vehicle in the city of Tyre, south Lebanon yesterday, Lebanese state media reported, as Israel vowed to press attacks on Hezbollah despite Iranian warnings.

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Armenia's PM wins vote, cementing Westward tilt

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's party won parliamentary elections, according to preliminary results yesterday that signalled a victory endorsing the nation's pro-Western shift.

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Peru's presidential runoff too close to call

Peru's presidential runoff was still too close to call yesterday, with four-time candidate Keiko Fujimori all but tied with her leftist rival to become the country's ninth president in a decade.

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