

Foreign sex workers begin to eye Nepal

Once the destination of trekkers and pilgrims, the Himalayan Shangri-la of Nepal is now becoming a hub of foreign sex workers with a bustling network of international procurers and clients.

Nepal's police began the first crackdown on international sex trade Wednesday when a nocturnal raid in one of the best locations of the capital netted them six Chinese sex workers, who were caught red-handed with six Nepali customers.

Superintendent Nabaraj Silwal said police became aware of the network about two months ago when they put under surveillance a three-storey mansion in Thamel, Kathmandu's tourist hub.

The house is located behind a former Rana palace that now is the education ministry, and is close to the former royal palace, which is now a national museum.

It was rented by a Chinese couple about two months ago. The nine-bedroom mansion had been converted into a bordello with six sex workers flown in from China.

During the raid, police came across a large TV screen, CDs of blue films, Chinese-made spirits and condoms.

While the man who was running the network was arrested along with the women and their clients, his wife managed to escape.

Silwal said investigations are on into other tipoffs received by police.

'We have learnt that there are similar bordellos with foreign sex workers, like Palestinians, Africans and Indians,' he told IANS.

'Most of them fly in from New Delhi, stay for a week and then leave.

'The bookings are done in advance and the customers are well-heeled people.'

The Naya Patrika daily, which broke the news Thursday and carried a photograph of the women being taken to hospital for health examinations, said the Chinese bordello was charging NRS 25,000 for a one-night stand and more if the women were asked to step out with customers.

After [New Delhi](#) police turned the heat on foreign prostitutes operating in the Indian capital where they used to fly in on tourist visas, the network began spreading to Nepal.

Growing connecting flights between the two countries, meant to boost tourism, have also been promoting inter-country sex trade.

Silwal said the racket involved huge sums of money.

People living in the neighbourhood told police that they used to see expensive cars going up to the mansion, driven by Nepalis as well as foreigners.

Indian Home Secretary G.K. Pillai is arriving in Kathmandu Thursday for talks with Nepali officials on controlling cross-border crime and other issues.

Sudeshna Sarkar (© IANS / India eNews)