



## Govt official among 9 arrested after underage sex probe

**KORKAMOL AKSORNDEJ**  
THE NATION

EIGHT MEN, including a government official and a nearly-retired married lecturer at a prominent public university, have been arrested on charges of allegedly paying boys under 18 for sex. Their 27-year-old procurer has also been charged with human trafficking and producing and distributing child pornography on a computer system, Deputy Tourist Police chief Maj-General Surachate Hakpan said yesterday.

The nine men, who have given only partial confessions, were released on Bt300,000 bail each by the Ratchadapisek Criminal Court in Bangkok, said the police's Anti-Human Traffic Division (AHTD) chief Pol Maj-General Kornchai Klaykluang.

Kornchai said the names of the eight sex-buying suspects, all aged in their 30s to 50s, wouldn't be released yet as the police investigation and legal action were ongoing. He also revealed that some influential people had asked the police not to release the eight suspects' names, something he said they could not do anyway, because their identities were still protected by law.

Seven boys aged 12-16 have been rescued and have provided information that helped police learn the identities of 10 customers, including the arrested eight men.

Kornchai said the rescued boys were mostly from poor families, in which both parents were working and so they didn't have time to oversee the kids.

The police investigation found that a



former convenience store employee, Nampol Som-ngam, 27, ran a Facebook page that allegedly offered to sell sex video clips featuring boys and sex services with underage boys.

If customers expressed an interest in purchasing the sex clips or sex services, Nampol required them to pay a Bt300 membership fee each in order to be added to his Line chat group called Rak Dek ("love children"), police said.

Nampol allegedly charged Bt1,500 – of which Bt500 was his commission fee – to arrange and send a boy to perform sex services for a customer.

Kornchai said another 100 members of the

Line chat group in question had not yet committed any crime as they had not been caught buying sex from the boys.

According to a police source, Nampol arranged the sex services for customers at hotels in the Charansanitwong and Bang Khae areas of Bangkok between March and July.

Meanwhile, Justice Ministry's Probation Department chief Prasan Mahaleetrakul confirmed that one sex-buying suspect used to work as a state employee at his agency but had resigned on July 31 to conduct his own business.

He said the department would soon launch its own investigation against the unnamed ex-employee.