

THAI PULSE

Kids taken into care

Ratchaburi's social welfare office acts after parents joke their baby is for sale.

10

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What's hot in Thai newspapers and social media

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Children in care after toddler-for-sale post



Online users strongly condemned a university's welcoming activities after photos showing youngsters being subject to what appeared to be cruel treatment surfaced online. FB/ANTI SOTUS

Ratchaburi province's social welfare office has taken a one-month-old baby boy into care after his parents posted a joking Facebook message that he was for sale, according to a report by Khaosod Online.

Welfare worker Thasanee Tanti-amnuay from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security's children and family shelter said the office learned about the matter from social media.

Net users were appalled by an announcement by a young couple who posted a photo of a baby with a message: "For sale, ready to be transferred to be your child. Give me a chat if you are interested. Prices are negotiable. US\$150,000."

The message was posted on Saturday. After receiving several inquiries about whether the baby was indeed for sale, one woman finally said it was a joke. She said she left the post because she was sick of her baby crying.

The baby-for-sale post, however, has been widely shared across social media, drawing many comments. After checking with Ratchaburi province's public health office and other networks, the social welfare office managed to locate the couple.

After a visit, the office found the baby is a boy, aged one month. The mother is 18, the father 22. The father has previously phoned the government's 1111 hotline and asked for help caring for two older daughters because he could



Ratchaburi's children and family welfare office has taken two children into its care after their parents uploaded an advertising message on Facebook, later said to be a joke, offering their younger baby for sale. KAPOOK

not afford to raise them, the report said.

Ms Thasanee said the family lives at an orchard, in a shack lent to them by relatives of the baby's mother. The father works as a farm-hand three days a week, earning 200 baht a day.

She said the baby's mother admitted posting the message to sell her baby but said she did it only as a prank.

Ms Thasanee warned the baby's mother as her post could be deemed in breach of the Child Protection Act and anti-trafficking law. The social worker has also left a record of the incident at Bang Phae police station.

She said the family welfare office had given the family help with free baby products and cash handouts a couple times before.

According to the social worker, the family moved around frequently. She said an initial check showed both the elder daughter and the new-born baby suffering from rashes. A check-up at Bang Phae Hospital revealed the rashes were caused by unhygienic care.

Ms Thasanee said that according to one of the family's relatives, the mother used water from ponds between the orchard rows to bathe the children. The water might be contaminated with chemicals, she said.

The shelter decided to take both children into care immediately after seeing the family's living conditions. She said the parents gave consent for the shelter to care for them for one year. After that, they will take the children back. It wasn't clear why the second daughter was allowed to remain with the parents.

Ms Thasanee said the shelter will evaluate the family's ability to care for the children again



Police officers and the director of the Phichit Election Commission office inspect the scene where macaques raided a poll booth. Phichit police and the provincial EC will leave it to the EC Bangkok office to decide whether to take legal action against the macaques. SITHIPOT KEBUY

when the one-year period is over. If it feels the parents are not ready, it will not return the children to them, according to the report.

Poll monkeys face music

Phichit police are writing to the province's Election Commission (EC) office asking whether it wants to take legal action against a group of macaques which raided a referendum voting unit and ripped down lists of voters and other referendum-related documents, according to Khaosod Online.

Prayoon Chakrapatcharakul, director of the Phichit EC office, said Pol Maj Gen Charuay Pholprasert, deputy chief of the province's police, sent his office the inquiry because the EC is the victim in this case.

According to Mr Prayoon, the fact is the macaques are wild animals so they are not covered by referendum-related laws.

Mr Prayoon also said that in his personal opinion, he can't see how the monkeys can be prosecuted as the Referendum Act used the word "whoever" when it comes to destruction of state property which implies it only covers humans.

He said the damage was not extensive either as a new list can be readily produced and posted. He believes there was no hidden motive behind the monkey business, and no human mastermind behind the raid.

He said, however, the authority to decide whether to take legal action against the monkeys lies with the central EC office in Bangkok. For that reason, he will send an official letter to the main EC office to ask if it wants to take action.

Hazing abuses rile net

Online users condemned as "backward" and "a gross violation of human rights" initiation activities for first year university students which included having students rolling in mud or kissing and brushing their teeth with chili paste.

The Facebook page ANTI SOTUS uploaded more than 40 photos showing what it said were activities by a Bangkok university to welcome freshmen.

The page said the photos were sent in from a person who wanted to tip off the public to the activities.

The photos show a young man being put inside a garbage bin, young men kissing each other, a young woman kissing a young man's nipple and a young woman brushing her teeth with what was said to be chili paste.

The page said even though the participants agreed to join the orientation trip, such treatment should be deemed against the law and a violation of human rights.

"How important are these welcoming activities? What is the point of entering a university? Why can't this system be abolished?" one user asked.

Another wondered why the university still allows such hazing activities. Also, he asked whether it would be better for senior students to welcome their juniors with community service activities such as cleaning public waterways or taking care of abandoned animals.

"Are these people intellectuals?" one user asked. Another simply commented: "Decadent."

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