

Su demands action on violence

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Armed police officers raid the night club X-Cube in Taichung on Wednesday.

Photo: Chang Jui-chen, Taipei Times

Premier Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) yesterday reiterated a warning to late-night entertainment proprietors and local police to better combat street fighting after a spate of violence in the past few weeks.

Heeding the premier's demand, police in major cities have over the past few days increased patrols and checks at nightclubs, hostess bars and karaoke parlors.

Police need to crack down on public rowdiness in areas with "special entertainment businesses," as such occurrences have negatively affected people's perception of public safety, Su said.

"To make these places safe, police must ensure that illegal drugs are not sold, and that there are no stabbings or violence. If more public violence occurs, then the local police chief will have to go," Su told a Cabinet-level public security meeting on Wednesday.

"Nightclub proprietors and police chiefs understand what I said earlier. People must not underestimate my resolve and our government's ability to handle the problem," Su said yesterday, while also asking police to put more effort into curtailing drunk driving.

Mass brawls broke out on two consecutive nights last week in Taichung, while a number of knifing and fighting incidents in Kaohsiung and the Taipei area have been reported this week.

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In raids over the past few days, 19 foreign women allegedly working as prostitutes — 13 from Thailand, five from China and one from Vietnam — were arrested, along with nine Taiwanese clients, National Police Agency officials said yesterday.

Police also detained two alleged leaders of sex trade operations that hired the women and arranged for their transport to a number of Taipei hotels, they added.

Officials said they are still searching for a man surnamed Chang (張), who allegedly has connections with international human trafficking rings and brought foreign women into the country to work in the sex industry.

Meanwhile, Taichung nightclub X-Cube, the site of one of last week's mass street brawls, announced a temporary shutdown following a police raid.

It has been accused by police of offenses against sexual morality by hiring scantily clad female dancers to interact with male patrons.

Kaohsiung police yesterday morning also conducted sweeps of dance halls and nightclubs.

To publicize their efforts, media were permitted to film officers checking IDs on scantily clad female dancers.

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