



Hare Krishna Leader Accused of Paedophilia in Cambodia

BY: STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mar 7, PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA (DPA) — The President of a Hare Krishna-affiliated aid organisation has been arrested from a guest house, allegedly in the company of two young girls in a state of undress, an anti-trafficking Police Chief said Thursday. US national Thomas Rapanos Wayne, alias Tattva Darshan das, whose age was not given, President of the non-government organisation Bhaktivedanta Eco Village (BEV) Cambodia, was allegedly arrested in a Phnom Penh guest house in the company of two girls aged 12 and 16.

The age of consent in Cambodia is 15. Phnom Penh municipal anti-trafficking police chief Eim Rathana said Wayne was arrested Wednesday and investigations were continuing.

"The American has denied the charges, and we must continue to investigate," Rathana said by telephone. BEV was registered in Cambodia as an aid organisation focusing on agricultural assistance, education and childcare in 2006.

An anti-trafficking group, Action Pour Les Enfants (APLE), which said it assisted in arresting Wayne, said by email Thursday that the alleged victims had been cooperating with the investigation.

Rathana said Wayne had yet to be charged Thursday evening.

The relatively obscure branch of his BEV organisation in Cambodia claims to assist "little children and even university students aspiring to learn", according to its website.

Cambodian authorities have arrested dozens of foreign paedophiles in recent years, often with the help of non-governmental organisations such as APLE, in an effort to shake off its reputation as a haven for child molesters.



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