

Police conduct anti-illegal bookmaking operations during World Cup

Police conducted a large-scale anti-illegal bookmaking operation codenamed "CROWBEAK cum WINDSHIELD" during the World Cup period between June and July, resulting in the arrest of 242 persons and seizure of betting records valued at \$130 million and \$4 million in cash.

In this large-scale anti-illegal bookmaking operation, Police searched a total of 103 locations, leading to 82 successful raids and the arrest of 242 persons, including 175 males and 67 females, aged between 17 and 87. The offences involved were "engaging in bookmaking", "betting with a bookmaker", "dealing with proceeds known or believed to represent proceeds of an indictable offence" and "operating illegal gambling establishments".

Police also seized betting records totalling \$130 million, \$4 million in cash of suspected criminal proceeds and 46 sets of computers in the operation.

In the operation this year, a significant cross-boundary bookmaking case was jointly detected by Hong Kong Police (HKP) and the Mainland Police.

In June, HKP and the Public Security Bureaux of Shenzhen and Dongguan conducted a joint operation codenamed "BLAZESPIKE" against a cross-boundary bookmaking syndicate. HKP raided 27 locations, arrested 45 persons and seized betting records valued at \$77.7 million and \$2.5 million in cash. The Mainland Police arrested five persons in Shenzhen and Dongguan, and seized some betting records and cash.

In addition, Police also carried out the following preventive education campaigns before and during the World Cup period:

- Police had closely joined hands with the Home Affairs Bureau and the Ping Wo Fund to promote anti-illegal gambling message through various media, channels and online platforms, for instance, setting up game booths at carnival, challenging the Guinness World Record, live broadcast of street drama through social media in districts, etc;
- Police produced an episode of "Police Report" on anti-illegal bookmaking and a Hong Kong Police Facebook video to enhance publicity;
- Posters and banners with anti-illegal bookmaking messages were displayed at entertainment premises, restaurants and strategic locations.

The number of successful raids, the number of arrests and the value of betting record seized during the previous World Cup in 2014 were 97, 176 and \$750 million respectively.