

Fake profiles and scams rampant on dating websites

Dating websites fail at verifying personal profiles as they claimed and people who work there blew the whistle on matchmaking fraud, The Beijing Times reported on Wednesday.

Dating websites are in the spotlight as Su Xiangmao, 37-year-old tech entrepreneur and multimillionaire committed suicide on Tuesday after he was scammed by his former wife, who he met from jia yuan.com, a well-known dating website in China.

In his suicide note, he claimed he and his wife were VIP members of a dating website with verified personal profiles made by website, according to early report. But he later found that information about his wife didn't check out and she scammed him for over 10 million yuan in months.

The paper reported that dating websites require people to register with a real name and ID, but information, like age, education or marital status and salary, can be easily altered.

After signing up with basic information, people can offer more personal data, like an academic certificate or property certificate, to have them verified so it will help them get more attention from other members, increasing their chances of making a match.

The dating sites claim they have several technology protections to verify information, including real-name registration, vetting and system where members can complain or report someone with fraud profile.

However, those protections seem to be not working at all, the paper said.

A reporter from The Beijing Times signed up on jia yuan.com and baihe.com successfully with a fake ID with wrong ID number and random mug shot.

He also had no difficulties in changing his information, like academic background, profession, marital status and salary right after signing up, without further verification.

Jiajia, not her real name, a member of jia yuan.com, believes in verified profiles, saying she cares very much if other members have verified information.

"I won't send any message to a man without any verified personal info," she said.

However, Chen Wei, an attorney with Beijing Yingke Law Firm, said, "Dating websites have no access to the Ministry of Civil Affairs' marriage registration database, nor the Ministry of Public Security's ID database, so there is no way they can verify the most basic personal information,

including a person's real name, age or marital history."

It seems there's a huge loophole in dating websites' vetting systems.

But it's just a start. More hoaxes are waiting.

A woman in the paper's story, who only gives the name Xiaoqing and who worked for two popular dating sites, including jiayuan.com, for over two years, explained how they exploit their clients.

She gets a commission fee from individuals who sign up with the matchmaking service

"I will get more salary if I can invite more online clients to sign up for a contract for matchmaking service," she said.

She said they have a template for clients saying someone's interested in them, no matter if it's true and they want to meet up or there's an event where there will be many people.

"We say all the fantasies for potential clients to show up at our event. Then our matchmakers will approach them individually to persuade them to sign up for our matchmaking service at the event," she said.

The matchmaking service costs range from thousands to hundreds of thousands of yuan and promise to find clients a certain amount of ideal dates in a certain amount of time. If the clients don't like who they meet, recommended by the service, the service will keep looking until they are satisfied.

It sounds fair. But actually it's common when matchmakers think some clients are too picky or hard to sell, they will ask their friends to fill in – just to fulfill the contract, rather than find the potential right person, according to The Beijing Times.

They usually show up for dates but are barely willing to talk about themselves and disappear with some excuses and never reply to any calls or messages from their dates. Some clients put the dots together, thinking it's a scam when they received calls from their disappearing dates defending their matchmakers after complaints are made.

Xi: Tourism important for progress

China, with long history, rich culture and beautiful scenery, welcomes tourists from all over the world, President Xi Jinping said in a congratulatory letter to an international tourism meeting on Wednesday.



UN World Tourism Organization assembly attendees look over promotional products in Chengdu, Sichuan province, on Wednesday. [Photo/China News Service]

"Tourism is an important channel for different countries and cultures to communicate with each other, an effective way of developing a country's economy and a key industry to improve people's lives," he said in the letter to the 22nd General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization.

The biennial officially kicked off on Wednesday in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province. Activities started on Monday and the event runs through Saturday.

More than 1,000 representatives from 130 countries and regions are attending the meeting to discuss using sustainable tourism as a development tool and reinforcing Belt and Road tourism cooperation.

Xi said China pays great attention to the development of the tourism industry, which accounts for more than 10 percent of the country's economy and employment. In the next five years, Chinese tourists will make 700 million outbound trips.

He said the UNWTO plays a positive role in promoting the development of global tourism and strengthening international tourism cooperation.

"We hope all nations can utilize the opportunities of the meeting and push the tourism industry globally for greater development together," he said.

Vice-Premier Wang Yang, who attended the meeting, said China joined the UNWTO

in 1983. Tourism has grown from a marginal to a major industry for the country's economy during the past three and a half decades, Wang said.

But China is not a "tourism power" yet, he said, and needs further development through expanded, deepened cooperation.

Taleb Rifai, secretary-general of the UNWTO, said China has become a world leader in all paths of life over the past decade and tourism is no exception.

"It is very inspiring to see China's commitment to international cooperation and tourism at the highest level," he said.

Li Jinzao, director of China National Tourism Administration, said the Belt and Road Initiative has created a larger tourism market among countries involved. There were at least 25 million tourist trips between China and other countries involved in the initiative in 2014 alone.

An initiative for tourism cooperation among nations involved in the initiative was formed during the meeting to improve tourism facilitation and quality and to face challenges and risks together.

"The Chengdu initiative sets out how we can harness tourism's potential and share our resources through large-scale partnerships to create a better future," Rifai said.

Hong Kong to hold fireworks display to celebrate National Day

The Hong Kong Commerce and Industry Associations announced on Wednesday that Hong Kong will hold a 23-minute fireworks display at the Victoria Harbor on Oct. 1 to celebrate the 68th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland.

The National Day fireworks display will be organized by the Hong Kong Commerce and Industry Associations and produced by the Pyro Magic Multi-media Productions Ltd.

Chairman of the Hong Kong Commerce and Industry Associations Lo Kam-yam, who also chairs the fireworks display organizing committee, said that the National Day fireworks display has eight scenes with each scene having its unique theme and fireworks synchronized to different background music.

The eight themes include "Set Sail," "Sail on," "Victorious Hands," "Journey" and "Love in Hong Kong," among others.

Wilson Mao, CEO of the Pyro Magic Multi-media Productions Ltd, said that the

sixth scene – “Love in Hong Kong” – will display for the first time in Hong Kong a “3D heart” fireworks effect symbolizing a heart-to-heart bonding and building together a love-filled Hong Kong.

The CEO said that as the National Day and the Mid-Autumn Festival are close to each other this year, the fourth scene of the fireworks display, entitled “Journey,” will depict homecoming reunion celebration for the Mid-Autumn Festival.

With “golden magic ball” in the air resembling the moon in the sky and balls of various colors representing costumes of China’s 56 ethnic groups, this scene symbolizes Hong Kong’s celebration of the National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival with the motherland.

The Hong Kong Commerce and Industry Associations was incorporated in 1993.

Members of its member organizations are leaders of major economic, trade and industrial enterprises in Hong Kong.

Sino-Russian university alliance established

The Sino-Russian comprehensive university alliance was established Wednesday in the south China city of Shenzhen.

Forty Chinese universities, including Beijing’s Peking and Tsinghua universities, and 20 Russian universities, including Lomonosov Moscow State University, joined the alliance, which aims to strengthen exchanges in modern teaching methodology, scientific research, cultural and social activities.

A joint declaration was released on July 5 between Peking University and Lomonosov Moscow State University to establish the alliance.

Nearly 100 university presidents from both countries participated in a forum on Wednesday, discussing topics such as talent cultivation, research cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Over 200,000 evacuated as Typhoon

Talim approaches

More than 200,000 people have been evacuated from Fujian and Zhejiang provinces as of Wednesday as Talim, the region's 18th typhoon this year, moves rapidly towards China's southeast coast.

The provincial meteorological department of Fujian forecast that Talim would intensify into a super typhoon with a speed of 180 to 200 km per hour within the next two days.

China's national weather observatory Wednesday forecast that Talim would either move northwest and make landfall in Zhejiang from Thursday night to Friday morning, or move north into waters near Zhejiang on Friday and then turn northeast.

More than 120,000 people have been moved to safe places, 20,000 fishing vessels taken shelter in Fujian, and nearly 2,000 scenic spots and construction sites shut down. In Zhejiang, nearly 9,000 people have been relocated and more than 4,700 fishing vessels harbored.

In the meantime, Typhoon Doksuri, the 19th in the region this year, has been forecast to either pass the coast of south China's Hainan Island or land in coastal areas of the province on Thursday night or Friday morning.

The Hainan weather bureau Wednesday morning issued an alert for the approaching Typhoon Doksuri.