

Syndicate busted, RM32.4m drugs seized

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Top News

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JOHOR BARU — Police crippled an internationally linked synthetic drug syndicate and seized a whopping RM32.4 million worth of drugs.

The drugs were seized when police raided a makeshift laboratory operating out of a hut at an oil palm plantation in Kampung Kong-Kong Laut in Masai, Johor.

Also raided were houses in Permas Jaya, Ulu Tiram, Desa Cemerlang, Masai and Pasir Gudang that were used to pack the drugs for distribution.

Police arrested eight suspects, aged between 30 and 58, including a Singaporean man and a Vietnamese woman.

Cash and vehicles worth a total of RM590,000 was seized.

Bukit Aman Narcotics Crime Investigation Department director Commissioner Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh said yesterday the suspects were part of a syndicate supplying drugs for the local, Singapore and Indonesia markets.

"The drugs have a street value of about RM32.4 million and can supply about 810,000 drug addicts," he said.

The haul from the raids on Tuesday included ecstasy pills, crystal methamphetamine (syabu) as well as chemicals and drug-processing equipment from the laboratory.

Mohamad said among the suspects nabbed was a chemist who police believe was instrumental in producing synthetic drugs.

A police source said the syndicate distributed the drugs through a network of runners.

Initial investigations revealed the drugs were distributed in entertainment outlets in the city centre here and other major cities in the country.

The source said the syndicate also mainly smuggled the drugs to Singapore and Indonesia.

"The demand for synthetic drugs such as syabu and ecstasy pills is high in Singapore, where they fetch a premium because of the risks.

"The drugs are also in demand in the

Indonesian market, mainly in Dumai, Batam, Tanjung Pinang and Bintan, where they are brought by speedboats (boat pancung)," said the source.

Singapore's Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) and its Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) recently arrested drug smugglers with packets of synthetic drugs hidden in motorcycles at the Woodlands Causeway Checkpoint.

The smugglers were believed to be linked to the recently crippled syndicate.

Police are investigating if the syndicate was connected to another one with international links in Johor Baru that was crippled when RM6.2 million in drugs was seized in July.

"Both syndicates have similar objectives and their market was Singapore and Indonesia," said the source.

"However, the previous syndicate had a smaller set-up compared to the recent bust."

Johor's geographical location is said to be ideal for syndicates to operate and send synthetic drugs to Singapore by land and Indonesia by sea.