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Busted – drug cell next to police HQ

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JOHOR BARU — A couple assumed a luxury apartment and commercial centre with a view of the state police headquarters was the perfect place for their drug distribution cell.

But yesterday evening, the cell got unexpected visitors when a team from the state Narcotics Criminal Investigation Department burst into the second-floor apartment unit in Jalan Abdullah Tahir and seized thousands of ecstasy pills and methamphetamine-based powder.

During the raid, police arrested a couple in their 20s believed to be members of a large distribution network.

A source told *Malay Mail* police learnt about the apartment being used as a drug base after they began monitoring one of the suspects.

The source said the raiding team spotted the male suspect outside the newly-completed Twin Galaxy Residence at 7pm.

“Upon seeing police the suspect ran but he was arrested after a brief struggle.

“The suspect had a plastic bag full of ecstasy pills that he was on the way to deliver,” said the source.

He said police then found an access card to the apartment and raided it where they detained the man’s female companion.

“The ecstasy pills and methamphetamine powder were packed into plastic bags containing 50 pills to 100 pills each.

“Initial investigations showed the apartment was used as a packing and distribution centre for a network of runners,” said the source.

Checks on the suspects revealed that the 29-year-old man was unemployed and based in Kuala Lumpur, while his 21-year-old female companion was from Johor.

It was understood that the suspects had been operating the cell for several months and the location was ideal for local distribution with many entertainment outlets nearby.

Malay Mail learnt that investigators believe that the cell was part of a wider synthetic drug distribution network that specialised in using runners to distribute the drugs.

Sources said such “independent” cells have



The drug cell operated from an apartment in this newly-completed Twin Galaxy Residence in Johor Baru. — Picture by Roslan Khamis

been a feature in major cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Johor Baru and Penang where the distribution network can be easily set-up and the reach is greater.

“Of late, such cells in Johor Baru have been catering not only to the local markets, but also to the more lucrative Singapore and also Batam and Tanjung Balai (both in Indonesia) markets as they are accessible via road and sea from the state capital,” said the source.

In Penang, police have crippled an

international drug syndicate following the arrest of three men, aged between 35 and 45, in Bayan Lepas on Tuesday.

The trio, including two Indonesians, had RM2.06 million worth of syabu and ecstasy pills hidden in a vehicle belonging to one of the suspects.

Penang acting police chief Datuk Roslee Chik said the suspects had been smuggling drugs from neighbouring countries and have been supplying them to the local and Indonesian market for the last six months.