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The suspects — (from left) Australian IER, American KSL and Malaysian CHJ — displayed by officials during a press conference at a Customs office in Denpasar, Bali yesterday. — Picture by AFP

DENPASAR — An Australian could face the death penalty after he was caught trying to smuggle crystal methamphetamine into Bali.

The 35-year-old man, identified by his initials IER, was arrested by Customs agents when he arrived at Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport on a flight from Bangkok on Dec 4.

"Officers searched him and found five packages weighing around 19.97gm and 14 tablets, which lab tests indicated were crystal methamphetamine and ecstasy," Customs

agent Husni Syaiful told a press conference yesterday.

The man could face the death penalty under Indonesia's harsh anti-narcotics laws because he was allegedly caught trafficking more than 5gm of drugs.

He was paraded before journalists with a Malaysian and an American — who are also facing drug charges in separate cases — wearing orange prison uniforms and balaclavas.

The 30-year-old Malaysian man was

arrested on arrival at Bali's airport on Nov 8 after 3.03gm of marijuana and 0.65gm of cocaine were found in his wallet.

The American man, identified as KSL, was arrested in connection with a package containing cannabis e-cigarette liquid seized by authorities at a Bali post office.

Indonesia has some of the world's toughest anti-drug laws, with sentences including the death penalty for smugglers who carry five or more grammes.

Several foreign and Indonesian nationals

have been executed by firing squad in recent years for drug trafficking, including Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran in 2015, a case that sparked diplomatic outrage and a call to abolish the penalty.

Bali officials said a lot of foreigners would attempt to smuggle drugs into the popular holiday destination with the new year approaching.

"There are many parties held in Bali during the year-end celebration," Syaiful said. — AFP