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KUALA TERENGGANU: The 38 students arrested in Terengganu for drug-related offences last year could just be the tip of the iceberg, authorities fear.

Bukit Aman Narcotics Crime Investigation Division director Comm Datuk Seri Mohamad Salleh said although the number may look small, the actual figure is likely to be higher as many cases go undetected.

"We believe there are actually five times more than the official statistics show," he told students at

SMK Chendering here during a ceremony to present appointment certificates to the school's 200 prefects and class monitors.

Last year, 679 students nationwide were caught for drug offences.

Comm Mohamad said efforts are ongoing to amend the Dangerous Drugs Act to better equip the police to handle drugs categorised under new psychoactive substances (NPS).

"In Malaysia, we have already detected 20 types of NPS but we can only take action on seven of them, which are listed under the Poisons

Act 1952," he said.

Fighting NPS trafficking and abuse is a challenge for police because the drugs are easily manufactured with readily-available chemicals and can also be disguised as candy or drinks, he said.

This makes such substances easy to consume in the open without causing suspicion, he added.

"Drug abusers no longer have to hide their crime in abandoned or hidden spaces," he said.

However, there is still a danger to innocent people because the drugs

embolden the abusers and may drive them to commit more serious crimes.

"They are likely to injure people around them," Comm Mohamad said.

On a separate matter, he said 2,264 bullying cases were recorded nationwide between 2013 and last year in which students extorted, threatened and inflicted harm upon others.

Comm Mohamad hoped school administrators maintain close relationships with the police to help curb crimes in school.