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Kedah National Anti-Drug Agency (Nada) director Mahadzir Elias (third from right) and Kulim Nada officer Sabarinah Aliuddin (on his right) at a certificate presentation ceremony for Nada icons in Kulim yesterday. With them are (from left) Nada icons Zainal Abidin Sudil, K. Muthusamy, Tan Khim Pheng and Azim Aliff Ishak. PIC BY AZHAR HASHIM

'264 Kedah teens used drugs last year'

ALOR STAR: There has been a worrying upward trend in the number of teenagers who use drugs in Kedah.

State National Anti-Drug Agency (Nada) director Mahadzir Elias said 264 teenagers, aged between 13 and 18, tested positive for drugs last year.

"This shows an increase from 41 teens in 2016. Most of them had quit school. This might be why they used drugs," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Mahadzir said cannabis, opiates and methamphetamine were popular among teenagers.

He said methamphetamine was widely used among high school students.

"This is because it is easy to find and cheap. It is sold at RM30 and we found that there is usually

a drug pusher among the students."

Mahadzir said 189 schools from 11 districts in the state had "high-risk" students who were likely to use drugs.

Students in these schools had urine tests to determine if they used drugs, he added.

He said students from 190 schools had urine tests in 2016.

Last year, one of the schools was dropped from the list of high-risk schools as it no longer had drug problems.

"We are focusing not only on urine tests for teenagers or high-risk students, but also educating students through awareness campaigns and 'Drug-Free School' programmes."

He said the goal of the programmes was to ensure that stu-

dents did not become drug addicts.

"These campaigns and urine tests are targeted at Form Three to Form Five students, while for primary schools, we will focus more on educational campaigns."

In October last year, NST reported that the Education Ministry was ready to work with the Home Ministry to address drug abuse among students.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid had said the co-operation, through the National Blue Ocean Strategy, was needed following the ministry's identification of 420 high-risk schools.

Last week, seven siblings, including a 10-year-old, tested positive for methamphetamine in Kampung Bukit Pokok Sena here.