

27 April 2017

## 'Brutal Enforcer' Held in Thailand

NewStraitsTimes . THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2017

22 | NEWS / Nation

DRUG SYNDICATE

# 'BRUTAL ENFORCER' HELD IN THAILAND

Penang suspect arrested at Suvarnabhumi Airport on Tuesday

BANGKOK

**A** PENANGITE, suspected of being a key member of a drug syndicate, has been described as a brutal enforcer who never hesitates to mete out severe punishment, including torture, to members of the syndicate who failed to carry out his orders.

The 44-year-old man was nabbed at Suvarnabhumi International Airport on Tuesday by heavily armed Thai policemen before boarding a flight back to Malaysia.

According to a Thai police source who was involved in the interrogation of the man, the suspect had allegedly beaten and tortured friends of two syndicate members who failed to smuggle drugs into Malaysia late last year.

"He beat and tortured their (syndicate members') friends and sent chilling images of the torture via smartphone to the two syndicate members after they failed to smuggle the drugs into Malaysia," said the source.

The two Malaysian syndicate members were nabbed by Thai police last December in Chumphon, southern Thailand, with 140 bars of heroin weighing 52.4kg and 41.9kg of "crystal" methamphetamine stashed in their car.

The final destination of the drugs was believed to be Penang.

The police, he said, knew which car was used by the two Malaysians to transport the drugs as it was bought by the Penang man in Bangkok, adding that the man had also been implicated in the discovery of 87kg of "ice" at a Hatyai house in January this year.

"His arrest (in Suvarnabhumi Airport) two day ago was a culmination of police efforts since late last year," the source said, adding that the man, who had been described as a "big fish", had been under surveillance by



The Malaysian suspect under heavy Thai police detail at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok on Tuesday. **BERNAMA PIC**

the authorities ever since he arriving in Thailand about two weeks ago.

The source also said that the suspect spoke fluent Thai and

maintained an exclusive condominium in Bangkok which he shared with his girlfriend. He also carried a pistol whenever he was in Thailand.

"He also has a fake Thai identity card," the source said, adding that the man led a lavish lifestyle in Thailand.

The suspect, according to the source, had been in the Fang district in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, recently to order drugs but negotiations with an unidentified party failed to materialise, prompting him to fly back to Bangkok before he was arrested by police.

The source also said that the suspect had admitted to travelling to Thailand at least 10 times a year to conduct drug activities.

He also confessed to being involved in drug-dealing activities for more than 20 years and had been imprisoned by Malaysian authorities twice for drug offences.

The suspect was brought to court yesterday under heavy police escort for remand.

His arrest followed another high-profile arrest of a Malaysian, dubbed "Mr T" from Johor, who is suspected of being a key member of an international drug syndicate last Wednesday at the Hatyai airport. **Bername**