

## Customs officers nab six foreign drug mules

Syndicates have returned to swallowing drugs to evade detection



Customs Department deputy director-general (enforcement) Datuk Zainul Abidin Taib showing the pellets being briefed on the heritage room by which were removed from the drug mules yesterday. With him is KLIA Customs Department deputy director Siti Baya Berahan. Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah

SOME drug syndicates have resorted to old ways in their attempts to smuggle drugs into the country.

This was discovered by Customs Department officers last month when they arrested five Nigerians and an Iranian who were found to have swallowed condoms filled with drugs.

From the Iranian and two of the Nigerians, Customs officers retrieved 191 pellets containing syabu worth RM626,500.

The authorities are still waiting for the other three men to excrete the drug pellets.

The trio, who were nabbed on Tuesday, are being detained at Serdang Hospital until the drugs come out.

The six were among eight people detained at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport last month for attempting to smuggle in RM3.45 million worth of drugs.

This amount does not include the drugs which have yet to be excreted by the three Nigerians warded at Serdang Hospital.

Of the six who had swallowed the drugs, the first was nabbed on Feb 16.

Customs Department deputy director-general (enforcement) Datuk Zainul Abidin Taib said the 31-year-old Nigerian had flown in from Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria.

He said the man was nabbed after Customs officers decided to conduct a body scan on the man as he was behaving suspiciously at the airport.

"The scan showed there was something in his stomach and we took him to the hospital for further examination.

"The items were later confirmed to be pellets containing drugs."

He said 66 pellets containing syabu worth RM264,000 were removed from the drug mule through excretion.

The second and third arrests were made on Feb 25 and 26 respectively.

"We removed 50 pellets, also containing syabu, from a 32-year-old Nigerian who was detained on Feb 25 and 75 pellets from a 27-year-old Iranian the next day."

He said the pellets were worth almost RM500,000, adding that this showed that syndicates had returned to their "old tricks" in order to smuggle in drugs.

"From smuggling drugs by hiding it in various items and luggage they are now back to the old trick of stuffing the drugs in condoms and making carriers swallow the pellets to avoid detection."

The arrests last month brings to 11 the number of drug mules detained at KLIA by Customs officers this year. All in, 44.4kg of various drugs worth RM8.3 million have been seized.