

21 April 2017

Drug lab goes bust before rollout



The drug haul under close watch by armed police. — Picture by Bernama

Drug lab goes bust before rollout

By Emmanuel Santa Maria Chin
emmanuel@mmail.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR — A drug lab prepared to manufacture amphetamines for distribution at local entertainment spots in the Klang Valley was thwarted by police on Tuesday.

Police carried out simultaneous raids at the lab in Taman Desa, along with three other premises in Kuala Lumpur, following cooperation with Taiwan's Criminal Investigations Bureau.

Nine people were arrested, all aged 22 to 46. They included a Bangladeshi man and a Vietnamese woman. An array of drugs with a street value of RM2.5 million, along with chemicals used in their manufacture,

were seized.

Federal police Narcotic Crimes Investigations Department director Datuk Seri Mohd Mokhtar Mohd Shariff said 30.5kg of Ephedrine, an essential chemical in the production of amphetamines or otherwise known as "syabu" was seized from the unoccupied lab.

"This could have produced around 20kg of syabu to satisfy about 100,000 addicts," he said.

Mohd Mokhtar said the chemicals were all in place in the house to be processed but police moved in to bust the lab before it started production.

"In their next probable move the syndicate was looking at bringing in a chemist to overlook the manufacturing," he said.

Mohd Mokhtar said the four raids took place at a snooker centre and a premise along Jalan Tun Razak, a location along Jalan Cochrane and the "would be" lab.

More than 43,000 pills said to be Ecstasy and Eramin, along with ganja, slabs, ketamine and amphetamine powder were seized during the raids.

Mohd Mokhtar said the pills were meant to be sold at entertainment outlets in the Klang Valley, where a bag containing 50g of pills would cost RM250 to RM300.

Assets including luxury cars, jewellery, cash, and luxury watches worth another RM830,000 were also confiscated from the suspects.

"The drugs, most of which came from China and Taiwan, could potentially satisfy another 145,000 addicts.

"These drug traffickers do not fear the law or the authorities. They are only driven by money and greed. Thankfully, international cooperation and intelligence sharing made this success possible for us," he said.

The nine suspects were remanded until Tuesday as they all face the mandatory death penalty under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, if convicted.

Mohd Mokhtar said so far this year up to Monday, a total 57,872 people have been arrested nationwide for drug related offences, with 2,385 of those being foreigners.

A total of around RM81.94 million worth of drugs have so far been seized this year, while RM49.16 million worth of assets have also been confiscated.