

## Drug peddlers preparing for violence against cops

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Special Tactical Intelligence Narcotics Group personnel oversee the display of drug paraphernalia seized during the Friday and Saturday bust. — Malay Mail pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 — In an all-out war against the drug menace over the last eight months, police seized 76 firearms and grenades, and arrested 128,008 people including nine kingpins and 5,420 foreigners.

Of the firearms, 12 were from five drug syndicates deemed dangerous while others were from individuals.

Bukit Aman Narcotics CID director Comm Datuk Seri Mohd Mokhtar Mohd Shariff said drug peddlers were preparing for violence with pistols, revolvers, shotguns, hand grenades and rifles in their possession.

He said although the firearms had not been used against police, they were proof of the correlation between drugs, crime and violence.

“They are getting more violent. They will do whatever it takes ... it’s only a matter of time before they use it on us,” he said.

Mokhtar said police also confiscated almost 4,000kg of drugs with a street value of RM159 million besides uncovering 16 drug laboratories.

The drugs seized included 2,512.61kg of ganja, 478.12 kg of syabu and 284.28kg of heroin.

Mokhtar said most of the foreigners arrested were from India and Iran who were helping the syndicates as “chemists” as they had the expertise to produce drugs.

He said Indian nationals were well-known for their ability to produce ketamine while Iranians dealt with syabu.

“They are roving chemists who will share their expertise to make money while here on a social visit pass,” said Mokhtar.

India is among the largest producers of ketamine commonly used in veterinary medicine as an anaesthetic, but has become popular over the years as a recreational drug.

Mokhtar said police busted two drug syndicates on Friday and Saturday with the arrest of 20 suspects.

In the operation on Friday involving eight raids in Bukit Bintang and Petaling Jaya, six people were arrested including three Taiwan nationals, and 42.5kg of syabu worth RM3 million recovered.

Mokhtar said two suspects spotted inside a car waiting to distribute drugs in Bukit Bintang were held.

They took police to a nearby hotel where syabu concealed in car radiators were found inside boxes in one of four rooms raided.

“The drugs were brought in from China for distribution to the local market and Indonesia,” he said, adding four more suspects were detained.

The next day, police uncovered two drug laboratories processing heroin and syabu with the arrest of 14 believed to be linked to Gang 24 in a swoop on seven locations in Shah Alam, Klang and Banting.

They recovered 151.7kg of drugs worth RM600,000.

On Aug 3, Bukit Aman uncovered a ketamine drug laboratory in Johor Baru funded by Gang 36 and seized 269kg of ketamine worth RM16.1 million.

It is believed to be one of the biggest successes against drug trafficking syndicates besides being the first involving locally-produced ketamine.

Police arrested 23 suspects comprising four Malaysians and 19 Indian nationals.

On Aug 13, a bungalow-cum-drug laboratory in Taman Ampang Utama here, operated by a local self-taught chemist, was busted with an estimated RM2.4 million worth of drugs seized.

A Glock pistol was also seized in the operation.

The mastermind had hired 12 people, including foreigners who he taught to produce drugs besides being tasked with storing the drugs at four other locations.