

## Foreign `dope` chemists

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— Sunpix by Shahrill Basri

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Unscrupulous foreign chemists out to earn big bucks are aiding drug syndicates in setting up laboratories for the mass production of synthetic drugs such as syabu.

Dubbed the "roaming chemists", anti-narcotics police have to date arrested 31 such individuals here since 2011.

More than two-thirds or 21 of them were Iranians while the rest are from Hong Kong, China, India and Taiwan.

Federal Narcotics Crimes Investigations Department (NCID) director Commissioner Datuk Mohd Mokhtar Mohd Shariff (*pix*) said today the crooked chemists were brought in by local syndicates as they are experts in producing designer drugs such as syabu.

"They call themselves 'roaming chemists' but we call them 'rogue chemists'. They are mercenaries and they do not come here for good causes but to produce garbage that destroys society. Drugs bring destruction." he told a press conference today at the federal police headquarters at Bukit Aman.

Mohd Mokhtar said in the latest bust involving a drug laboratory set deep in the interiors in Behrang, Perak on Wednesday, police seized 274kg of syabu worth RM27 million with the arrest of eight suspects including two Iranians - one who is a chemist.

He said the operation netted the drugs and the suspects in several raids carried out by the NCID between 4.30am and 6.45am in Behrang, Tanjung Malim, Ulu Bernam, Ampang, and Klang with the assistance of the Special Tactical Intelligence Narcotics Group (STING), an elite team of anti-narcotics personnel.

He said four suspects have past criminal records for drug related offences.

"The syabu we seized can supply 1.4 million drug users had it made it to the streets. We learnt that the syndicate produced syabu for both the local and international market. Five of the eight suspects also tested positive for drug abuse.

This is a new trend of syndicates running drug labs moving their clandestine operations to the interiors of small towns to avoid detection by police. In the past, they operated in condominiums or other residential properties." he said.

Mohd Mokhtar said the suspects who are aged between 22 and 46 were remanded for seven days for investigations.

He said the success of the operation was a result of a joint-cooperation between the Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) in efforts to eradicate transborder drug trafficking.

Mohd Mokhtar said between January and this month, police detained 94,927 people for drug related offences nationwide.

He said most of those held were drug users while 9,707 and 22,419 were arrested for trafficking and possession respectively.

Mohd Mokhtar said 2,253 of the total held were foreigners.

He said police also seized an array of illegal drugs amounting to hundreds of kilogrammes and worth RM121 million in the same period.