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'Ice' Dealer Held in Hat Yai

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Cops cripple meth ring with help of Chinese and Asean law enforcement agencies

BANGKOK

THAI police scored a major success in crippling an international drug syndicate with the arrest of a Malaysian man, whom they believed played a key role in smuggling hundreds of kilograms of "Ice", a type of methamphetamine, into Malaysia.

The Malaysian man, dubbed "Mr T", is from Johor.

The authorities were also responsible for foiling an attempt by his two accomplices to smuggle 282kg of "Ice" worth millions of ringgit into Malaysia through the Sadao border in March last year.

"Mr T" was nabbed at Hat Yai airport yesterday, upon arrival from Chiang Rai.

"The two Malaysians, who were arrested with 282kg of "Ice" last year, told the authorities that the drugs belonged to him (Mr T)," said the deputy commander of Thailand's Narcotics Suppression Bureau, Major General Supakit Srijantaranon here yesterday.

The two men, he said, had also informed the authorities that the Johor man had facilitated between four to five successful drug smuggling attempts into Malaysia, each carrying about 100kg of "Ice" to undisclosed locations in the country.



Thai police yesterday nabbed a Malaysian man, dubbed 'Mr T' whom they believe plays a key role in smuggling 'Ice', a type of methamphetamine, into Malaysia, in Hat Yai yesterday. (Inset) Authorities also seized foreign currencies worth about RM3.8 million yesterday. BERNAMA PIX



According to him, Thai police also nabbed a Thai woman and Taiwanese man in Chiang Rai, as well as another Thai woman in Chiang Mai yesterday.

All of them were believed to be members of the international drug syndicate.

NSB chief Lieutenant General Sommai Kongvisaisuk, who was present during the media conference, said the police believed "Mr T" went to Chiang Rai to place an order for another consignment of drugs.

"The Malaysian man and his Thai wife ran many businesses."

Supakit said following the arrest of four people yesterday, the authorities confiscated foreign currencies worth about 30 mil-

lion baht (RM3.8 million) and 20 million baht worth of assets.

Another 20 million baht in assets were also seized from the same syndicate months ago, bringing the total cash and assets seized to 70 million baht.

According to Supakit, Thai authorities received good cooperation from China and Malaysia, as well as other Asean countries, in gathering information about the syndicate and arresting its key members in a swoop on Wednesday.

More than 10 companies in southern Thailand were raided, resulting in the arrest of four people yesterday and several companies were facing investigations because of their suspected

links with the drug syndicate, he said.

"We are also expected to issue arrest warrants against other suspects later," he said.

Head of Thailand's Office of Narcotics Control Board Sirinya Sitdichai said the authorities began learning about the inner workings of the syndicate following the arrest of the two Malaysian men.

"The authorities found out that the syndicate not only trafficked drugs, but also operates other businesses using money gained from the drug activities," he said, adding that Thai authorities would use various laws to eradicate drug syndicates.

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