

## **Indian drug ring smashed**

CHENNAI: Indian intelligence has smashed an inter-state gang attempting to smuggle ephedrine from a pharmaceutical factory in Hyderabad, allegedly to be trafficked into Malaysia for New Year parties.

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) detectives detained four suspects and seized 4,100kg of ephedrine, or "party drug", in the factory during the midnight raid on Monday.

"A gang in Chennai had contacted another gang in Hyderabad to supply these drugs.

"They wanted to smuggle them to Malaysia.

"One of the four suspects arrested is already wanted for previous ketamine smuggling to Malaysia," said Chennai DRI additional director general C. Rajan.

The value of ephedrine and other chemicals used to produce illicit drugs that were seized was estimated at nearly RM10mil on the international market.

Drug peddlers from Hyderabad and Chennai, all in their 40s, were picked up during the week in a well-orchestrated raid.

DRI suspects the factory could have been a major source of illicit drugs in the past.

"It is a licensed pharmaceutical factory but much of the ephedrine found there was not accounted for.

"We believe some quantities were also smuggled out before," said Rajan.

The arrests has dealt a crippling blow to drug trade in south India, as the gang could possibly be a major conduit for narcotic buyers in South-East Asian markets. - Bernama