

Penang a drug processing hub, says Nur Jazlan

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KUALA LUMPUR: Penang is favoured by international drug trafficking syndicates as a drug processing hub for markets in the region, said Deputy Home Minister Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed (*pix*).

He said this was based on the increasing value of seizures, the number of arrests and raids made by the authorities especially the police recently.

"Penang has a good transportation system and is now becoming a hub for drug processing. It is easy to move drugs out of Penang to Thailand and Indonesia," he told a press conference after meeting Global Commission on Drug Policy and Malaysian Aids Council delegates at Parliament House today.

Nur Jazlan said the island's strategic position as well as its sea routes were the major factors which attracted drug trafficking syndicates to the island and making it a transit point.

In the meantime, Nur Jazlan said the ministry was formulating the final draft of the National Drug Policy to cover legal, treatment, education, rehabilitation and prevention aspects which would be more effective in curbing the escalating drug menace in the country.

Nur Jazlan said the new policy was designed to create a drug-free Malaysia thus eliminating the supply and demand for drugs.

"The new policy will take into account the importance of religious, cultural and ethnic diversity in the country and will mete out deterrent sentences directed at educating, which is more suitable compared to the normal rehabilitation programme," he explained.

The meeting, led by former president of Switzerland Ruth Dreifuss, discussed Malaysia's agreement to participate in the United Nations special session on drugs next year. – *Bernama*