

Taiwan makes biggest heroin bust in 20 years

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A syringe and spoon commonly used as drug paraphenalia. The Taiwan authorities seized over 220 pounds (99 kg) of heroin in its biggest drug bust to date. — stock photoTAIPEI, Oct 12 — Taiwan seized more than 220 pounds (99 kilograms) of heroin in its biggest bust of the drug in 20 years, arresting two people involved in smuggling it from Vietnam, officials said Saturday.

Agents confiscated the 270 heroin bricks smuggled in a cargo container in southern Kaohsiung city on Friday.

They had been stored in 40 bags marked as frozen taro, and were mingled with hundreds of bags of real taro, the Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

The drugs were believed to be manufactured in Myanmar and shipped to Taiwan via Vietnam, the bureau said, adding that 530 pounds of ketamine were also found in the container.

The drugs are worth an estimated US\$100 million (RM318 million).

Drug abuses have been on the rise in Taiwan. Authorities last year seized 176 pounds of heroin worth around US\$80 million in a fishing boat, and arrested seven people involved in smuggling it from Cambodia, according to the bureau.

Under Taiwan's anti-drug laws, manufacturing, transporting and dealing heroine is punishable by death. — AFP