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Rahim-Drug

ADDICTS IN MALAYSIA SPEND RM1.25 BLN A YEAR ON DRUGS

PETALING JAYA, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- Drug addicts in Malaysia as a whole raise nearly RM1.25 billion a year to fund their habit, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor said here today.

"The enormous profit generated by trafficking coupled with the potentially wide market for both the traditional and the new 'designer drugs' would undoubtedly continue as a threat as traffickers will find willing consumers," he said.

Statistics show that 35 per cent of the recorded addicts in Malaysia are employed, with factories, schools, national land development schemes and the fishing industry not spared from this menace, Abdul Rahim said.

The current shift to designer drugs has also affected the working class and 'yuppies' who regularly frequent night sports and, more alarmingly, the younger generation is increasingly affected by drug usage, he said.

Abdul Rahim said this when opening the Third International Private Sector Conference on Drugs in the Workplace and the Community (Asia Pacific Region), jointly organised by the U.N. Drug Control Programme, International Labour Organisation and the National Association for the Prevention of Dadah (Pemadam).

Pemadam president Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob was present along with 216 participants from various government and non-governmental organisations.

Abdul Rahim said the fact that a solution has not been found for a complete cure or an effective method to prevent relapse is a threat to the resilience of future generations.

"The Malaysian authorities are determined to make this country a difficult hunting ground for drug traffickers and have taken the utmost stringent steps in curbing both the demand and supply through the enactment and enforcement of tough laws," he said.

Abdul Rahim said that from 1995 to August this year, 3,248 people have been arrested in relation to offences under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 which carries the mandatory death sentence on conviction, while 26,530 others were arrested for possession offences.

"During the same period, various drugs were seized including 55,987 kg of heroin, 5,114 kg of cannabis, 4,490,775 psychotropic pills, 43,899 ecstasy pills and other minor seizures of raw and prepared opium, morphine and cocaine," he said.

The Dangerous Drugs (Special Preventive Measures) Act 1985 which provides for the detention of traffickers has been found to very useful in dealing with traffickers, and 3,040 persons were arrested under this act from 1995 to August this year.

Speaking to reporters later, Abdul Rahim said government agencies dealing with drug problems have always been committed and there has never been any slackening of interest.

He said that in the case of police, they now have a separate narcotics department which indicates how serious they regard the problem.

He added that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Home Minister, has agreed to the establishment of the National Agency of Drug Abuse, which he himself will chair, to tackle drug abuse.

Its membership will include various relevant agencies including the religious department.

He said there is a lack of commitment from the people at large towards

combatting drug-related problems and measures should be taken to overcome that.

-- BERNAMA
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