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Myanmar-Drugs

SPDC CLAIMS SUCCESS IN ANTI-DRUG WAR

By: Syed Jamil Jaafar

YANGON, March 8 (Bernama) -- Myanmar's ruling authority, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has claimed success in its anti-drug war with its latest destruction of seized drugs amounting to more than 4,500 kg of opium and 900 kg of heroin.

To combat the drug menace, the SPDC formed the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) which has mapped out various strategies and tactical measures.

The main strategy is to uplift the socio-economic status of the poppy cultivators so that poppy planting, as a means of livelihood, will be eliminated, according to the English-language paper "The New Light Of Myanmar."

A separate ministry was set up to carry out the task of developing the border regions so that they become opium-free zones and according to the SPDC, this has been achieved in the Mongla area in Shan state while progress has been made in Kokang and Wa regions.

The SPDC said it was also working closely with the United Nations Drugs Control Programme, other international organisations, neighbouring countries and following Myanmar's entry into Asean, with the Asean countries.

At a CCDAC ceremony to destroy seized drugs on Feb 27, the 12th such occasion, so far, 4,584.292 kg of opium, 898.43 kg of heroin, 93.95 kg of brown sugar powder, 11.3kg of liquid opium, 20.5kg of low-grade opium, 138.87 kg of marijuana, 1,499.97 litres of phensedyl, 2.84 million amphetamine tablets, 88.19 gallons of cough syrup, 4,845 cough tablets and an assortment of other narcotic drugs were destroyed.

The street value of the drugs was estimated at US\$1 billion.

Including the latest destruction, the authorities have put to the torch, 16,500 kg of opium, 2,860 kg of heroin, 118.33 kg of opium oil, 131.19 kg of liquid opium, 158.52 kg of brown sugar powder and 4,358 kg of marijuana.

As Malaysia faces a serious drug abuse problem, the drugs issue is expected to be touched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and SPDC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe in their talks tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to arrive here tomorrow for a two-day official visit. He will meet Gen Than Shwe for official discussions in the afternoon and again at a state banquet in the evening.

Meanwhile, streets in Yangon have been decorated with Malaysian and Myanmar flags as well as billboards welcoming the Malaysian leader.

Malaysia is well-known among the Myanmar people who see the country as a model of development and Dr Mahathir as champion of the third world.

Myanmar (formerly Burma) used to be a key participant in the Merdeka Soccer tournament and among the older football enthusiasts here, names like Soh Chin Aun, R. Arumugam and Mokhtar Dahari evoke exciting memories. --

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