

4 arrested with B16m in meth | Bangkok Post: news

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Authorities have arrested four suspects, including two former drug inmates, and seized 20kg of crystal methamphetamine with a street value of up to 16 million baht, the Justice Ministry said yesterday.

Yuth Jankaew, 60, Sakkayasorn Boonsapthawikul, 57, Pech Mangkhalad, 60, and Wichit Thep-am, 31, were detained in recent crackdowns carried at hotels and department stores in Bangkok's Ratchadiphisek area and Nonthaburi's Ratchaphruek area, said Dusadee Arrayawuth, deputy permanent secretary for justice.

The operations were carried out by a combined force of the Department of Special Investigation and the Armed Forces Security Centre, he said.

Aside from the crystal methamphetamine, the agents seized four cars and seven mobile phones, said Pol Col Dusadee.

Mr Yuth and Mr Sakkayasorn had served jail for dealing in heroin, and they returned to the illicit drug trade after they were released, said Pol Col Dusadee. They were also thought to have worked with drug traders while in prison.

Pol Col Dusadee declined to say which prison and which drug network they were connected with, saying the details could not be revealed pending investigation.

He said the suspects are also connected to a major drug trafficking network in northern border areas and in a neighbouring country.

During searches at three houses in Chiang Rai's Chiang Saen district and two houses in Bangkok, agents discovered the crystal methamphetamine had been divided and put in small packages for distribution, said Pol Col Dusadee.

The Central Institute of Forensic Science is checking fingerprints from the searched houses and the seized cars.

Authorities believe their findings will lead to an expansion of the investigation, he said. The call logs of the mobile phones showed the suspects had contacted people in a neighbouring country.

The Justice Ministry says the suspects smuggled between 100kg and 200kg of crystal meth into Bangkok, where it sells for 800,000 baht per kilogramme, he said.