



ASEAN-NARCO

Interception of Illicit Drug Trafficking via the International Airport amidst COVID-19

Illicit drug trafficking has kept on going despite the pandemic of COVID-19. It was observed that the illicit drug trafficking via the international airports was slow down and did not operate much due to the lockdown policy of many governments in ASEAN at the beginning of 2020. At the end of 2020, the lockdown policy was reviewed to re-open for the international travelling. Illicit drug trafficking by air route was revived, more cases were found, Thailand as the example, most of the cases were ice and cocaine trafficking from the flight via Africa as well as the parcel post that every case was operated by the West African. Thai females were used as couriers. Particularly the cases that were seized in December 2020, it seemed to be weekly seizures. Quite number of cases that happened at the end of the year 2020 which are as follows:

On 24 November 2020, under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB, Royal Thai Customs and Office of Security seized parcel posts concealing 7.63 kg (including packages) of ICE in 3 air purifiers at Bang-na Distribution Center, Bang Chalong Sub-district, Bang Phli District, Samut Prakan Province, they were ready to be sent to New Zealand. The parcel posts were deposited at Sanam Pao Post Office so the authorities examined its surveillance cameras and found 3 males and 1 female as suspects. The female used her passport as a service confirmation. The identity shown in the passport was a Vietnamese named Nguyen Ti Li. The 3 male suspects were the ones who bought the air purifiers from Power Buy store at the Central World. The authorities extended the investigation and kept on



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surveillance to their accommodation, a hotel in Aree Alley where they believed that more air purifiers concealing ICE like the ones they seized on 24 November 2020 should be kept in their room. Finally, on 3 December 2020, at 04.00 P.M., the AAITF arrested Mr. Niwat Jaitrong and Miss Kanoklak Thongprasri on 3 December 2020 when they came to the hotel and asked to enter the room. The authorities arrested the two suspects and inspected the air purifiers and found 8 kg of ICE. When the interrogation is finished, the suspects and evidence will be sent to NSB for proceedings.



Ice concealed in air purifiers.

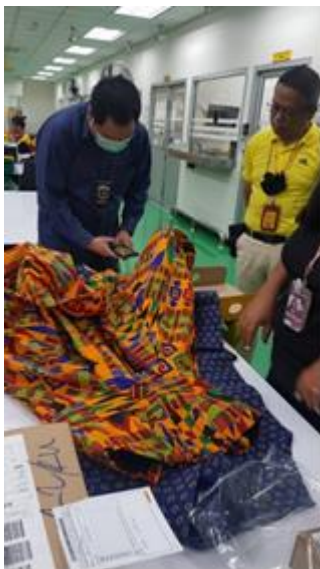
On 8 December 2020, under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB, Royal Thai Customs and Office of Security seized an international parcel (DHL Express) concealing 42 g of cocaine in 8 buttons of local African shirts. The parcel was delivered from South Africa to Miss Suphansa Praserttham living in Prawet District, Bangkok but the authority found that there was no such name in the address given. The extension of investigation was carried out on



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9 December 2020, one of the authorities disguised as a postman and went to her place and the authorities arrested Mrs. Puangpetch Moonka who came to receive the parcel from the undercover agent at the condo lobby. However, the suspect did not cooperate with the authorities and refused that the parcel did not belong to her. She would send it to her friend later when she was informed the destination. The suspect did not reveal any useful information related to the case. However, the authority inferred from the suspect's circumstance that she must pick up the parcel for her Nigerian husband. The suspect once lived in this condo but already moved to another place and she refused to tell the authorities her current address. (There was no any identity document found, including her room key card.) The financial investigation would proceed afterwards.





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On 16 December 2020, under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB and Royal Thai Customs were informed of suspicious objects in the passenger's luggage loaded on ET608 flight of Ethiopian Airlines (Addis Ababa-Bangkok). The authorities arrested Miss Sirikwan Patchoo as they inspected her luggage and found 3.402 kg of cocaine concealed inside. The suspect admitted that she was persuaded by a friend named Ann to travel abroad. Her friend took care of everything such as air tickets and accommodation in Addis Ababa and in Bangkok for self-quarantine, including giving the suspect 20,000 baht for personal use. When the suspect reached Addis Ababa, there was a man named Mike came to see her every day. He paid for her accommodation and assisted her to get COVID-19 testing result before returning to Bangkok. On the second day of her trip, Mike had a look at her luggage and told her that he would like to give knitted hat and bracelet to his friend in Bangkok. She did not know how the cocaine was concealed in her luggage. She claimed that Mike probably concealed it while she was going outside. She went to Addis Ababa on 4 December 2020 via ET609 (BKK-ADD). The Customs official took the suspect to local Police Station for detainment and proceedings.





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On 17 December 2020, under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB and Royal Thai Customs were informed of suspicious objects in the passenger's luggage loaded on LY082 flight of Israel Airlines (Bangkok-Tel Aviv). The authorities arrested two suspects:

1. Mr. Chalodemchai Saeya who carried 3,080 g (including packages) of Ice concealing in the packages of instant coffee and electrolyte powder inside the loading luggage.

2. Mr. Wiriya Pitthayasathanpob who carried 3,115 g (including packages) of Ice concealing in the packages of instant coffee and electrolyte powder inside the loading luggage.

The authorities interrogated the suspects before sending them to NSB along with the evidence for further proceedings.





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On 17 December 2020 at 12:30 hrs., under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB and Customs arrested Miss Wassana Srionrod for possession of 3.1 kg (including packages) of cocaine which concealed in her luggage loaded in ET618 flight, Ethiopian Airlines (Addis Ababa-Bangkok). The suspect admitted that she was hired for 50,000 THB by Mr. Yutthana Tokerd or Geng to pick up a luggage concealing illicit drugs at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and bring it back to Thailand. Geng would contact her again after the quarantine was over. The arrest record is in the progress. The suspect and evidence will be sent to Suvarnabhumi inspectors later. Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the suspect had to be in the quarantine, so the extension of the investigation could not be proceeded.





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On 26 December 2020 at 12:40 hrs., under the operation of ASEAN Airport Interdiction Task Force (AAITF), ONCB, NSB and Royal Thai Customs were informed of suspicious objects in the passenger's luggage loaded on ET644 flight of Ethiopian Airlines (Addis Ababa-Bangkok). The authorities found 1.6 kg (including package) of cocaine concealing in 4 book covers inside the luggage and arrested Miss Warittha Ardsiangram, the luggage owner. The suspect admitted that she found her Ethiopian boyfriend Obano through online dating application in October 2019. Obano came to meet her at Pattaya for one day then returned to his country. They had been online dating for a while then the suspect flew to Ethiopia to meet Obano in August 2020.

She returned to Thailand in October 2020. Before she flew to Ethiopia again on 18 December 2020, Obano introduced a Thai woman named Gift to her. Gift was the one who arranged everything for the trip. The day before the suspect flew back to Thailand, Gift's boyfriend in Ethiopia asked her to bring 4 books for his girlfriend. Customs official took the suspect to Suvarnabhumi Police Station for detainment and proceedings.

