



The ONCB and the Royal Thai Police Arrested a Major Drug Kingpin “Nu Chen” in the South Korea, Linked to Over 60 Arrest by Warrants

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On April 7, 2026, at 4:00 PM, H.E. Pol. Lt. Gen. Ruttapol Naowarat, Minister of Justice, announced the successful arrest of a major drug kingpin, Mr. Thapanun, also known as “Nu Chen,” who had been hiding in the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The operation was carried out through the close cooperation between the Narcotics Suppression Bureau of the Royal Thai Police, the Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), and the South Korean authorities. His identity was thoroughly verified before he was extradited back to Thailand to face legal proceedings and for further investigation involving with related drug networks.



The 43-year-old suspect was listed among the “Most Wanted” targets of the Narcotics Suppression Bureau of the Royal Thai Police as well as of the Office of the Narcotics Control Board and previously had a bounty of up to 1 million baht. His involvement in the drug trade dates back to the early 2000s, when he began as a drug user and a small-scale dealer in the Srinakarin area in Samut Prakarn Province during 2000-2002. Over time, he rose to become a key figure in a transnational drug trafficking network, establishing connections with ethnic groups in neighboring countries and playing a major role in drug production and smuggling into Thailand. His network smuggled tens of millions of methamphetamine pills and more than a ton of crystal methamphetamine into Thailand for about a decade.



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Between 2009 and 2019, he was linked to multiple large-scale drug cases involving tens of millions of methamphetamine pills and significant quantities of crystal methamphetamine, including a major seizure of 1.5 tons of crystal methamphetamine in Tak province. Authorities believed that he played a high-level command role within these networks, and he is currently wanted under more than 60 arrest warrants.

To evade arrest, the suspect employed sophisticated methods, including staging his own death in Myanmar in 2022 to mislead the authorities. However, continued intelligence operations revealed that he was still active abroad. Investigators later tracked him to South Korea, leading to his eventual arrest through international coordination.

Officials described the operation as a major success in cross-border law enforcement cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to expand investigations, seizing assets, and dismantling drug trafficking networks. The authorities emphasized that no matter how far offenders flee or how carefully they conceal themselves, they will ultimately be brought to justice.