

Customs intercepts RM5.1mil cannabis shipment

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BUTTERWORTH: A covert enforcement team from the Customs Department discreetly tailed a suspicious vehicle along the North-South Expressway.

The officers in unmarked enforcement cars had begun their surveillance at the Jitra toll plaza, patiently following the vehicle.

Their break came when the car, after a 80km drive, exited the Sungai Petani (South) toll plaza.

They intercepted the vehicle and upon inspection, uncovered a massive haul of cannabis worth more than RM5.1mil.

Inside the car were three large sacks, resembling rice bags, each marked with Thai labels and branding.

Instead of grain, the bags were stuffed with 49 tightly packed slabs of cannabis, weighing a total



False cargo: Rohaizad displaying some of the seized marijuana in rice bags at the Customs office in Perai. — LIM BENG TAT/THE STAR

of 52kg.

Two men in the car, in their 30s,

were also detained during the

operation on June 29, said Penang

Customs Department director Rohaizad Ali.

He said initial investigation showed that the drugs had been

smuggled from a neighbouring country and were in transit at the time of the bust.

"Four teams were deployed to monitor the suspects' movements."

"We believe their original plan was to exit at the Sungai Dua toll plaza in Penang."

"However, realising they were being followed, they attempted to evade by taking the Sungai Petani exit instead."

"The car they used was a rented vehicle to avoid detection," he said during a press conference at the department's office in Perai yesterday.

Rohaizad said both suspects have since been charged under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952.

If found guilty, they face either the death penalty or life imprisonment along with a minimum of 12 strokes of the cane.