

# Raid on illegal Bukit Mertajam e-waste processing plant sees 11 nabbed

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**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** 11 foreign nationals were arrested during a raid on a factory alleged to have illegally processed electrical and electronic waste (e-waste) in Machang Bubok.

General Operations Force (GOF) northern brigade commander Senior Asst Comm Shahrum Hashim said the arrests were made during a raid by the GOF intelligence unit and the state Environment Department on Thursday (Feb 6) at about 7.30pm.

"During the raid, we seized 48 jumbo-sized bags containing e-waste materials and machine processing worth about RM21.83mil," he said at a press conference at the factory on Friday (Feb 7).

SAC Shahrum said the raid followed two weeks of surveillance using drone technology at the premises, located within an oil palm plantation and near a main road.

The GOF and Environment Department raided the illegal factory and arrested 11 foreign nationals, including a Chinese woman who is the factory manager and owner representative.

Among those arrested were a Bangladeshi man, three Myanmar men, and six Myanmar women, all aged between their 30s and 40s.

The e-waste was reportedly imported from several countries and processed at the factory before being sent to other parties for further processing.

"Investigations revealed that this factory initially operated legally for recycling plastic waste from 2016 until 2022. The factory owner, a local citizen, later rented it out to another individual," SAC Shahrum said, adding that the premises may have been rented to a Chinese national for illegal operations.

During the inspection, more than 48 jumbo-sized bags containing e-waste, including copper, were found. The factory had also recently purchased several e-waste processing machines within the past three months.

The factory was dismantling, crushing, and separating e-waste using specialized machines before packing the processed materials into jumbo bags for transport to another location for further processing.

The scattered waste poses a serious hazard, especially during rainfall, as contaminants can be carried to the surrounding area, potentially affecting water quality and the environment.

All foreign nationals were detained under the Immigration Act for not having valid travel documents, except for the Chinese woman whose passport had expired.

The factory was found to be in violation of the Environmental Quality Act as well as the Local Government Act 1976 under the By-laws on Licensing of Premises, Trade, Business, and Industry.

All foreign nationals will be handed over to the Malaysian Immigration Department for further action.

State Environment Department director Noraziz Adinan said this is the largest seizure in Penang to date.

"The items were seized under Section 46B(A) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 and will be sent to the exhibit storage facility in Gopeng, Perak, until the case is resolved," he said.

Noraziz added that waste samples suspected to be classified as scheduled waste SW110 (e-waste) and SW104 (dust or dross containing heavy metals) have been collected.

The samples will be sent to the Malaysian Chemistry Department for analysis to determine the waste composition.

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**TAGS / KEYWORDS:**

**E-Waste , Illegal Processing , Bukit Mertajam , Arrest , General Operations Force , Environmental Violation , Immigration Act , Environmental Quality Act , Waste Hazard , Noraziz Adinan**