

ABC's Delhi correspondent faces 3 new drug-related charges

Prosecutors Friday laid three more drug-related charges against Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) Delhi-based South Asia correspondent Peter Lloyd, who was last week arrested in Singapore on charges of trafficking and possession of drug 'ice'.

The two new charges of consumption and two charges of possessing drug utensils laid against the veteran foreign correspondent carry penalties of up to three years jail, a fine of A\$7,500 or both, according to media reports here.

Lloyd's lawyer asked for a week-long adjournment and continuation of bail, which were both granted by Singapore's Subordinate Court. Lloyd will appear in court again August 1, reports the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

While the most serious charge of trafficking the drug crystal methamphetamine hydrochloride - known by its street name 'ice' - still stands, the amounts allegedly involved have been altered. Singapore's Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) now says Lloyd had 0.4 of a gram and sold as little as 0.1 of one gram of the drug 'ice', according to ABC.

Earlier, the veteran journalist had been charged with supplying about one gram of the drug 'ice' to a 31-year-old Singaporean man for Singapore \$100 (A\$ 75) at a hotel early July.

He had also been charged with allegedly being in possession of 0.8 gram of the 'ice', a smoking pipe and six syringes when he was arrested by the police from Singapore's CNB. His urine tested positive for amphetamines.

If convicted, Lloyd faces up to 20 years jail and between five and 15 strokes of the cane.

Lloyd was undergoing hospital treatment for a serious eye infection, while on leave from his posting in New Delhi, when he was arrested July 17 after a tip-off to police.

The 41-year-old South Asia correspondent was Wednesday released on bail after a Singaporean friend, Mohamed Mazlee Bin Abdul Malik, posted a surety of A\$45,000,

Singapore imposes some of the most severe penalties for drug use and possession, including a mandatory death penalty for some drug offences.

The award-winning journalist, who had covered the case of Australian Nguyen Tuong Van executed by Singapore in 2005 for heroin trafficking, was expected to return to Australia to host ABC's new breakfast show beginning this September.

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