

BANGKOK TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1989

'Drug agent' killed during police shootout

Chiang Mai — A veil of secrecy has been thrown over the fatal shooting during a drug bust of a man who may work for a foreign drug suppression agency.

A "Mr Farmachen" as identified by the Chiang Mai Hospital was shot in the back of the neck at about 11 p.m. on Sunday.

Provincial police suspected the 36-year-old man to be either an informer for the Metropolitan Narcotics Unit (MNU) or an officer of a foreign drug suppression agency, possibly the US Drug Enforcement Administration, working with the Bangkok drug unit.

However, officers of the MNU denied there was any fatal shooting at all.

Deputy Police Chief Police Gen. Sawasit Theeraprasit also went up to Chiang Mai yesterday after news of the shooting leaked.

However, when he saw reporters at the Muang Police Station he would not come out of his car. Investigating officers instead got into the car and drove out of the station.

The drug bust occurred behind the Pa Thai cinema in Muang District where two officers were trying to

buy heroin from three alleged drug dealers through the introduction of two tuk tuk drivers.

MNU officers had been informed of the transaction and set up a stakeout. Provincial police sources said the MNU officers charged into the area firing their guns after a fist fight broke out.

One of the two foreigners, Mr Farmachen, was shot in the back of the neck and died later in hospital. The other, Mr Allen Oliveira, 23, was unhurt.

Police would not reveal the pair's nationalities or comment on whether they were working with them.

Police arrested the alleged dealers — Prapasit Srichandorn, 25, and his two sisters Nipha, 27, and Pimpan, 23, and the two drivers — Sant Pinta, 32, and Chan-kaw Boonthong, 34.

Police also confiscated six sticks of heroin weighing 2,400 grammes and a pick-up truck.

An officer of the Bangkok drug unit, Pol Lt-Col Amarsarin Wattakorn, denied that there was any fatal shooting.

The provincial police also kept mum on the incident.