

# THAILAND BECOMES FIRST ASIAN COUNTRY TO LEGALISE MARIJUANA

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Thailand legalised the growing of marijuana and its consumption in food and drinks on Thursday, the first Asian country to do so, with the aim of boosting its agriculture and tourism sectors but smoking pot is still against the law.

Shoppers queued up at outlets selling cannabis-infused drinks, sweets and other items as advocates of the plant welcomed the reform in a country that has long had a reputation for strict anti-drug laws.

Among those at the front of the queue at one Bangkok shop was Rittipong Dachkul, 24, waiting since Wednesday evening to buy his first ever legal marijuana. "I took a bus here after I got off work," Mr. Rittipong said.

"We're now able to find it easily, we don't have to worry about the source, but I have no idea about the quality," he said, referring to the strength of the products on offer.

Thailand, which has a tradition of using cannabis to relieve pain and fatigue, legalised medicinal marijuana in 2018.

## Restriction in place

The government, banking on the plant as a cash crop, plans to give away a million plants to encourage farmers to take up its cultivation.

The possession and sale of cannabis extracts containing more than 0.2% of its psychoactive ingredient, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is not allowed, which will mean smokers of the drug known as "pot", "weed" and a host of other names, will struggle to get "stoned".

Those who break the law can still face jail and fines.

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