

Thai Cannabis Advocates Rally Against Plans to Recriminalize Cannabis

Dozens of Thai cannabis advocates gathered on Thursday to voice their opposition to the government's plans to re-list marijuana as an illegal narcotic, just two years after its decriminalization.

Government's Policy U-Turn

Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin recently announced a policy shift, advocating for cannabis use only for medical purposes. This reversal comes amid concerns about drug addiction among youth.

Calls for Reconsideration

During a meeting with the health minister, pro-cannabis groups urged the government to reconsider its decision. *Prasitchai Nunual*, secretary-general of Thailand's Cannabis Future Network, emphasized the historical and cultural significance of cannabis in Thai society.

The Impact of Decriminalization

Thailand initially legalized cannabis for research and medical use in 2018 and subsequently removed it from the national narcotics list two years ago. This led to a surge in recreational use, with a proliferation of cannabis cafes and dispensaries nationwide.

Challenges and Criticisms

Critics argue that the liberalization of cannabis was rushed and lacked clear regulations, leading to public confusion and misuse. Despite the government's intention to restrict cannabis to medical use, many businesses in the cannabis industry advocate for comprehensive legislation to address safety concerns and support stakeholders.

Looking Ahead

The debate over cannabis policy in Thailand underscores the complex interplay between cultural traditions, public health considerations, and economic interests. As the government navigates this issue, stakeholders continue to push for policies that balance regulation with the needs of farmers, retailers, and medical users.

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