



NEWS RELEASE

ICA ANNUAL STATISTICS 2022

In 2022, Singapore’s borders were re-opened fully. The Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) facilitated the sharp increase in movement of people and goods in and out of the country, while continuing to ensure security at our borders. ICA also kept the immigration offender situation in Singapore under control by conducting rigorous and regular in-land enforcement operations.

Reconnecting Singapore to the world

2 With the full resumption of international travel in 2022, ICA saw a **significant increase in traveller volume**, clearing nearly 105 million travellers. During the year-end school holidays in December 2022, traveller volume peaked, almost returning to pre-COVID-19 levels at the land checkpoints.

	2021	2022	
Total travellers cleared	5,923,000	104,880,000	▲ 1,670.6%

[Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand]

3 While the overall **volume of containers, consignments, and parcels cleared in 2022 (9.7 million) saw a dip of 10.5%** from the previous year, the volume of **low-value goods¹ increased by over 40%**, spurred by high internet usage and ease of online shopping. These

¹ Low-value goods are subject to GST relief when they are imported by air/post. They do not require permits and have a total Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) not exceeding \$400. This is not applicable to intoxicating liquors and tobacco. From 2022, ICA has included items that are imported via air express with bulk permits into the low-value goods category as they also do not require individual permits.

low-value goods were mainly cleared through the air cargo checkpoints. Some examples of low-value goods purchased online include clothing, toys, and sports equipment.

	2021	2022	
Containers cleared	1,248,000	1,178,000	
Consignments cleared	5,103,000	5,163,000	
Parcels cleared	4,532,000	3,396,000	
Total cleared	10,884,000	9,736,000	▼ 10.5%

[Rounded to the nearest thousand]

	2021	2022	
Low-value goods cleared	35,113,000	49,775,000	▲ 41.8%

[Rounded to the nearest thousand]

4 ICA also managed an **unprecedented surge in passport applications in 2022**. Many citizens had put off renewing their expired passport during the two years of travel restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. **To deal with the surge, ICA redeployed officers from other work units to process passport applications 24/7 and issued more than 1.25 million passports in 2022. 72% of these were issued between May and October.**

	2021	2022	
Passports issued	300,000	1,253,000	▲ 317.7%

[Rounded to the nearest thousand]

Detecting threats at the borders

5 ICA's core mission is to safeguard Singapore from the entry of undesirable people and goods that may pose security, crime, and health risks to our community. The use of data and technology, coupled with specialised training, has enabled ICA officers to effectively detect and sieve out undesirable travellers and thwart smuggling attempts.

Increase in number of multiple identity cases detected at checkpoints

6 In recent years, ICA has **deployed multi-modal biometric clearance systems at the checkpoints to better detect travellers attempting to enter Singapore using an impersonated identity or an identity different from their previous trips to Singapore.** They do so to evade detection at the checkpoints, often because they had previously committed or attempted to commit various offences in Singapore, had overstayed, or had been deported.

7 In 2022, there was an **increase in the number of multiple identity cases** detected at the checkpoints, by around 15 times.

	2021	2022	
Multiple identity cases detected at checkpoints on arrival	28	441	▲ 1,475%


Increase in number of forged/tampered travel documents detected at checkpoints

8 **ICA officers also detected more travellers attempting to enter Singapore with forged/tampered travel documents.** In 2022, the number of travellers detected with forged/tampered travel documents **increased from one in 2021 to 21 in 2022.**

	2021	2022	
Forged/tampered travel documents detected on arrival	1	21	▲ 2,000%

More attempts at smuggling contraband detected at the checkpoints

9 Similarly, there was an **increase in contraband smuggling attempts** foiled by ICA at the checkpoints in 2022, by about 28.9%.

	2021	2022	
Contraband cases detected	27,000	35,000	 28.9%




[Rounded to the nearest thousand]

10 Despite the surge in traveller volume, ICA officers remained vigilant against attempts to smuggle prohibited items into Singapore. In 2022, ICA successfully foiled multiple attempts to smuggle significant consignments of contraband and illicit drugs into Singapore via the land, air, and sea checkpoints. Huge consignments of contraband cigarettes and drugs were found hidden among legitimate consignments transported by lorries. In some of these cases, the offenders had used sophisticated methods of concealment. These included hiding contraband in the convertible hood, spare tyres, door panels or in various modified compartments in the vehicles. (Refer to [Appendix A](#) for related cases.)

Ensuring a safe Singapore through our in-land enforcement operations

Increase in the number of immigration offenders arrested

11 In 2022, there was an ***increase in the total number of immigration offenders arrested*** by ICA.

	2021	2022	
Illegal immigrants arrested	56	57	 1.8%
Overstayers arrested	299	357	 19.4%
Total immigration offenders arrested	355	414	 16.6%

Decrease in the number of harbourers and employers of immigration offenders

12 There was a ***drop of around 4% in the total number of harbourers and employers of immigration offenders arrested*** by ICA in 2022. The majority of the harbourers arrested in 2022 were either family members or friends of the immigration offenders, who claimed to

have overlooked to extend or renew the offenders' immigration pass or did not check their immigration status. Another group of harbourers arrested had rented/sublet their units or rooms without conducting checks on their tenants' immigration status in Singapore.

	2021	2022	
Harbourers of immigration offenders arrested	184	166	▼ 9.8%
Employers of immigration offenders arrested	52	60	▲ 15.4%
Total harbourers and employers of immigration offenders arrested	236	226	▼ 4.2%

13 In 2022, most immigration offenders employed by errant employers were found working in the construction, maintenance, and food & beverage industries, or as freelance house cleaners or odd job workers. The majority of the employers had failed to exercise due diligence; they did not conduct checks before employing them or did not ensure that their immigration status in Singapore remained valid throughout the employment period.

14 ICA will continue to come down hard on harbourers and employers of immigration offenders, to deny them shelter and means of subsistence, and thereby make it more difficult for them to stay illegally in Singapore. Members of the public and employers must play their part to deter overstayers, by denying them shelter and employment, and to report suspected cases to ICA at [<https://go.gov.sg/icafeedbackio>].

Increase in number of persons arrested for marriage-of-convenience (MOC) related offences

	2021	2022	
Persons arrested for MOC-related offences²	1	9	▲ 800%

² ICA's previous Annual Statistics reports had reflected the number of persons convicted of MOC-related offences for that particular year. Henceforth, we will be reflecting the number of persons investigated and

15 The number of persons arrested for MOC-related offences in 2022 **increased from one to nine persons** compared to the year before. The nine arrests made in 2022 comprised four couples, and one person for arranging the MOC for one of the four couples. The foreign spouses had engaged in a MOC in order to prolong their stay in Singapore, with the local spouses receiving gratification in the form of money for assisting in the application for immigration facilities.

16 ICA takes a serious view of foreigners entering into MOCs with Singaporeans to obtain immigration facilities in Singapore. We will continue to take tough enforcement action against them and also the middlemen who facilitate MOCs. Members of the public should report any suspected cases of MOC, as well as any other immigration-related offences, at [<https://go.gov.sg/icafeedbackio>].

Enhancing operations and customer experience by transforming the way we work

New Clearance Concept (NCC): Enabling ICA to increase clearance throughput

17 In 2022, ICA kept up the pace of rolling out new initiatives as part of its flagship NCC project to transform our checkpoint operations, to better manage the increasing volume of travellers and goods.

NCC passenger clearance

18 In May 2022, ICA introduced the **Automated Clearance Initiative to allow eligible first-time foreign visitors to use automated lanes for arrival immigration clearance without a separate enrolment process**. By the end of 2022, more than 2.4 million foreign visitors had been enrolled.

charged (pending a conviction outcome) to better reflect ICA's enforcement efforts in arresting, investigating, and charging MOC offenders year on year.

19 In December 2022, ICA introduced a ***new automated lane – the Special Assistance Lane (SAL)*** – at selected passenger halls in Changi Airport. The SAL enables travellers using a wheelchair and family groups of up to four persons (e.g. parents with young children) to enjoy the convenience of automated immigration clearance, and perform immigration self-clearance using biometric identifiers (iris and facial recognition). Singapore is the first country in the world to introduce an automated lane that allows multiple travellers to perform self-immigration clearance as a group. The SAL is currently available to Singapore residents and will be extended to eligible foreign visitors from March 2023.

20 To expand our clearance capacity, ICA installed 125 additional automated lanes at our checkpoints in 2022, and is looking to install 61 more lanes in 2023.

NCC cargo clearance

21 ICA has also introduced NCC Cargo, to provide a seamless, paperless, and secure cargo clearance process, supported by better detection capabilities which leverage data analytics and artificial intelligence. One of the NCC Cargo initiatives involves clearing ***conventional cargo via the SG Arrival Card (SGAC) Cargo Module***. This was trialled at Air Cargo and Ports checkpoints in November 2021 and May 2022 respectively, and has been fully implemented at these checkpoints since January 2023.

22 Drivers/freight forwarders simply need to submit their vehicle number and Cargo Clearance Permits (CCPs) via the SGAC Cargo Module before seeking cargo clearance at the checkpoints. ICA officers at the checkpoints will then retrieve the information transmitted to ICA's Cargo Screening System, without having to manually process each hardcopy CCP as was previously the modus operandi. This reduces clearance time by more than two minutes per vehicle. (Refer to Appendix B for quotes from stakeholders.)

Services Centre Next Generation (SCNG): Providing a 'No Fuss; No Visit; No Waiting' experience for our customers

23 Through greater use of digitalisation, biometrics, and automation, customers can now transact with ICA at their convenience, anytime, anywhere.

24 From May 2022, the ***birth and death registration process has been made simpler, and ICA now issues digital birth and death certificates instead of physical ones.*** With the introduction of digital birth certificates, parents no longer need to make a trip to the hospital or ICA Building to collect a physical birth certificate. The Government also streamlined the death registration process to ease the administrative burden of post-death matters on bereaved family members. The deceased's next-of-kin is now able to receive a digital death certificate from the My Legacy portal after the death is certified by a registered medical practitioner, without having to register the death. This allows the bereaved family to focus on other matters in their time of grief.

25 ICA will continue to innovate to enhance its products and services to secure our borders, and to deliver service that our customers value.

IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

17 FEBRUARY 2023

Appendices

Appendix A

Case #1 – Detection of duty-unpaid cigarettes at Pasir Panjang Scanning Station

1 On 24 June, ICA made the largest seizure of contraband in 2022 at the Pasir Panjang Scanning Station. 37,728 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were transported in a container attempting to exit the Free Trade Zone. ICA officers had noticed anomalies in the scanned images of the container and directed it for further checks. The contraband was found concealed within large rolls of aluminum foil.

QR code to ICA's Facebook post on 24 Aug 2022:



Case #2 – Detection of duty-unpaid cigarettes at Tuas Checkpoint

1 On 7 Nov 2022, ICA made the largest seizure of contraband at the land checkpoints. 12,852 cartons and 360 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from a Malaysia-registered lorry arriving at Tuas Checkpoint. The smuggled contraband was concealed inside a consignment of box cartons.

QR code to ICA's Facebook post on 8 Dec 2022:





Case #3 – Detection of electronic vaporisers and duty-unpaid cigarettes at Woodlands and Tuas Checkpoint in one night

1 On 29 Oct 2022, ICA officers at the Tuas and Woodlands Checkpoints foiled two smuggling attempts within the same night. At Woodlands Checkpoint, officers detected 1,260 pieces of e-vaporisers, refill pods, and related accessories concealed inside the convertible hood of a Singapore-registered car. Around two hours later, officers at Tuas Checkpoint detected 163 cartons and 40 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the speaker and make-shift bed within the cabin of a Malaysia-registered lorry transporting live poultry.

QR code to ICA's Facebook post on 23 Nov 2022:



Case #4 – Officers at Parcel Post Section detected a parcel containing suspected drug paraphernalia

1 ICA officers at the Parcel Post Section detected a parcel containing suspected drug paraphernalia. CNB conducted follow-up operations and arrested a boy and a girl, both aged 16, for suspected drug trafficking offences in the vicinity of Bukit Batok Street 21. About 59g of cannabis and various drug paraphernalia were seized from the girl's home.³ Three 14-year-

³ CNB's news release "Five Teenage Drug Traffickers Arrested", issued on 27 October 2022.

old and two 16-year-old teenagers were arrested by CNB for suspected drug trafficking and about 226g of cannabis (estimated to be worth close to \$7,000), food products believed to be infused with cannabis, and drug utensils were seized. The five teenagers were students from local and international schools.



Improvised drug paraphernalia seized from a residential unit in the vicinity of Bukit Batok Street 21.
Photo: CNB



Some of the cannabis, believed to have been mixed with tobacco and rolled into joints, seized from the girl's home in the vicinity of Bukit Batok Street 21.

Photo: CNB

Appendix B

Quotes from stakeholders on NCC cargo initiative

“With the paperless clearance initiative, we have seen significant improvement in the clearance process. Our drivers can now exit checkpoint and get the cargo checks done at a quicker time, which improve our efficiency by 30% and save paper printing by more than 50%!” – **SFS Global Logistic**

“The On-the-Fly clearance allows the scanning of cargo be done en route to the gate, thereby reducing time spent on travelling and waiting at the inspection centre. This swifter process not only improves the overall clearance experience for hauliers at Tuas Port, but is also environmentally greener as the shorter vehicle idle time helps to reduce carbon emissions!” - **Ang Wee Dee, Assistant Vice President (Haulier & CargoCare Services), PSA Singapore**