



# ICA News Centre

## Latest highlights...



Source of photo: ICA

### ICA scored on a high note with a ten-year-low in immigration offences

Immigration offences are at a record low with fewer foreigners arrested for immigration offences in 2010 as compared to a decade ago, reported the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) on Monday.

### INSIDE stories...

- ▶ **MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH** effective to bring down no. of illegals
- ▶ **STEADY DECLINE:** Numbers caught harbouring and employing illegals
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- ▶ **Stepped up checks at checkpoints** uncovered more **ILLEGAL SMOKES**
- ▶ **Fireworks, air-soft guns, stun guns, & swords TOPPED** the chart
- ▶ **More travellers caught with AVA-CONTROLLED** items



Source of photo: ICA

### Contraband smuggling successfully foiled at our border

The persistent vigilance of ICA officers paid off as we detected a record high of 67,600 contraband smuggling cases attempting to get past our border.



<http://twitter.com/icasingapore>

Website: <http://www.ica.gov.sg>



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31 January 2011, reported by Serene Wong

### ICA SCORED ON A HIGH NOTE WITH A TEN-YEAR-LOW IN IMMIGRATION OFFENCES

INCREASED vigilance and unrelenting efforts to enhance border security have been successful in keeping the immigration offenders' situation in check. In the latest report released by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA), the total number of foreigners arrested for immigration offences in 2010 fell by 23 per cent to 4,260 as compared to the previous year. The number of people arrested for

Immigration arrests on continuous decline			
	2009	2010	% Change
Immigration offenders (IO)	5,560	4,260	▼ 23%
Harbourers of IO	80	77	▼ 4%
Employers of IO	50	26	▼ 48%



Source of photos: ICA

harbouring or employing the illegal foreigners have also fallen by four and 48 per cent respectively.

The continuous decline in the immigration arrest numbers is testament to the authority's efforts in safeguarding our borders and keeping the undesirables from entering our country.



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31 January 2011, reported by Correspondent Vivian De Cruz

## MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH EFFECTIVE TO BRING DOWN NUMBER OF ILLEGALS

THE multi-pronged approach adopted by the ICA to curb the unlawful presence of illegal immigrants and overstayers in the country has once again proven to be effective. The close working relationships that the ICA has forged with strategic partners such as the Police, Central Narcotics Bureau and the Ministry of Manpower over the years have also paid off as the trend of Immigration offences continues to slide.

Besides collaborating with the other agencies in keeping the immigration offenders' situation in check, the ICA is constantly exploring innovative ways to enhance its operational capabilities to deal with evolving threats.

For instance, to further enhance the capabilities of the Biometric Database for Immigration Clearance (BDIC) that detects ex-immigration offenders who attempt to re-enter Singapore with different identities, the ICA has scaled up the system to incorporate facial recognition capabilities. The new system, termed i-FACES has

### Joint efforts foiled smuggling attempt...

The Home Team officers safeguarding Singapore's shorelines are relentless in their efforts to prevent immigration offenders from breaching our line of defence. On 1 October 2010, a team of ICA and PCG officers focused their attention on a suspicious shadow of a vessel speeding towards our shorelines along Senoko Way. Did their vigilance reap a fruitful arrest? For details, see news release *"Vigilant Border Security Thwarts Human Smuggling Attempt"* at

[www.ica.gov.sg](http://www.ica.gov.sg).

"Stunt" of the year - Crouching in car boots







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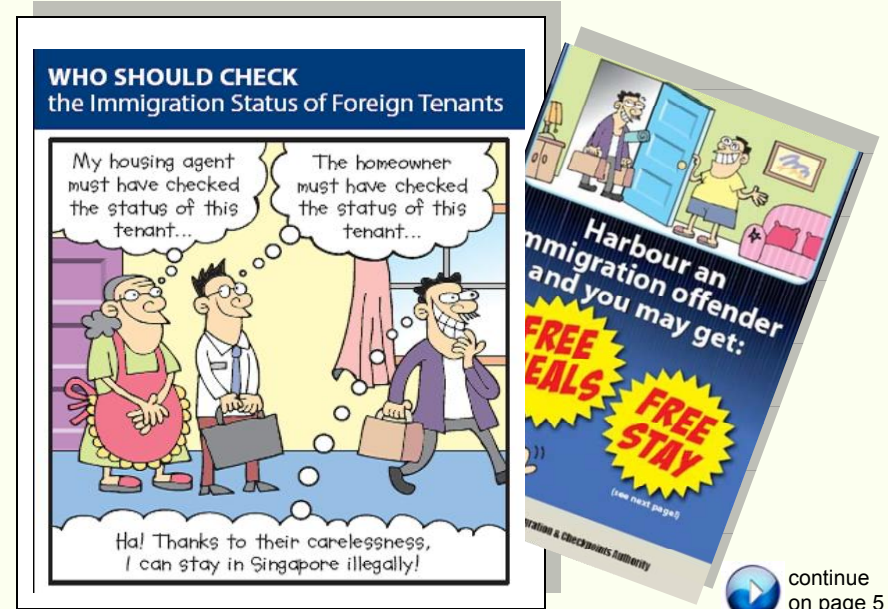
been deployed since January 2009. This feature is instrumental in assisting ICA officers to effectively and efficiently detect foreigners with adverse antecedents attempting entry into Singapore. It complements the BDIC by enabling the frontline officers to perform facial recognition and matching of travellers' images against those persons of interest in the BDIC repository.

31 January 2011, reported by Senior Reporter Uncle Cheong

### STEADY DECLINE: NUMBERS CAUGHT HARBOURING OR EMPLOYING ILLEGALS

COMPARED to the previous year, the numbers of people caught harbouring or employing immigration offenders have decreased by four and 48 per cent respectively in 2010. While the figures have been on a general downward trend since 2000, the ICA is not letting down on its publicity efforts to generate greater awareness amongst the home-owners and employers on the serious consequences of harbouring or

employing illegals. A series of awareness programmes to proactively engage stakeholders like homeowners has underlined the ICA's efforts to spread the anti-harboursing message. The decline in the number of harbourers and employers arrested could also be attributed to the ICA's proactive dissemination of news releases highlighting successful case detections on immigration offenders to send a strong and clear signal on ICA's tough stance against illegal immigration issues to the public .



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The amendments made to the Immigration Act in 2004 to impose mandatory imprisonment and a fine on middlemen, ie. housing agents and foreign labour agents who assist landlords to rent their premises to immigration offenders also have a deterrent effect to keep the situation in check.

### ***“Working with the community, through the community...”***

As the support of the community is important to ensure that the immigration offenders situation remains in check, the ICA continues to engage its community to help spread the message of not providing lodging to the illegals.



ICA ambassadors spreading the anti-harboring messages at a community event.

Last year, more than 70 talks, exhibitions and visits were conducted as part of ICA’s community engagement efforts. ICA will continue to work with the community, through the community to generate greater awareness on the dire consequences of harbouring illegals.

### ***“The synergy of joint enforcement...”***

Besides raising awareness on the social and legal consequences of harbouring immigration offenders, ICA also works closely with its strategic partners such as SPF and MOM to conduct regular inland enforcement to flush out the illegals. The synergy of these collaboration has sent a strong signal to the employers and the illegal job agents that the authorities are prepared to come down hard on those who willfully flout the laws.

### **Joint enforcement efforts flushed out immigration offenders and their employers ...**

Between 29 October and 1 November, the ICA officers, together with officers from SPF and MOM, mounted a series of operations at restaurants and eateries which were known to employ immigration offenders. The joint operation resulted in the arrest of three Singaporeans and one Sri Lankan who were involved in supplying the restaurants with immigration offenders. 33 illegal workers were arrested in this operation at 23 restaurant outlets across the island.



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31 January 2011, reported by Correspondent Dynesh K

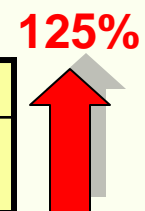
### VEHICLES SEIZED BUCK THE TREND



INTENSE operations and stepped up checks at the land checkpoints have thwarted many immigration offenders' attempts to depart Singapore illegally by hiding within vehicles. Last year, 18 vehicles used in ferrying immigration offenders out of Singapore were seized by the authority. This is more than twice the eight vehicles seized in 2009, bucking the trends in recent years.

Another factor that contributed to an increase in the seizure was the specialised training provided to equip our frontline officers with the skills and abilities to suss out suspicious drivers, modified compartments and illegal hiding places in huge vehicles.

Majority of the 18 vehicles detained were cars; of which only one was a Singapore-registered saloon. The remaining foreign-registered vehicles included a tour bus, a lorry and a 40-foot trailer.



Year	2009	2010
Total no. of vehicles seized for conveying immigration offenders	8	18





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31 January 2011, reported by Senior Reporter Glenn Chua

# CONTRABAND SMUGGLING SUCCESSFULLY FOILED AT OUR BORDER

*“More than 185 cases detected at the checkpoints everyday”*

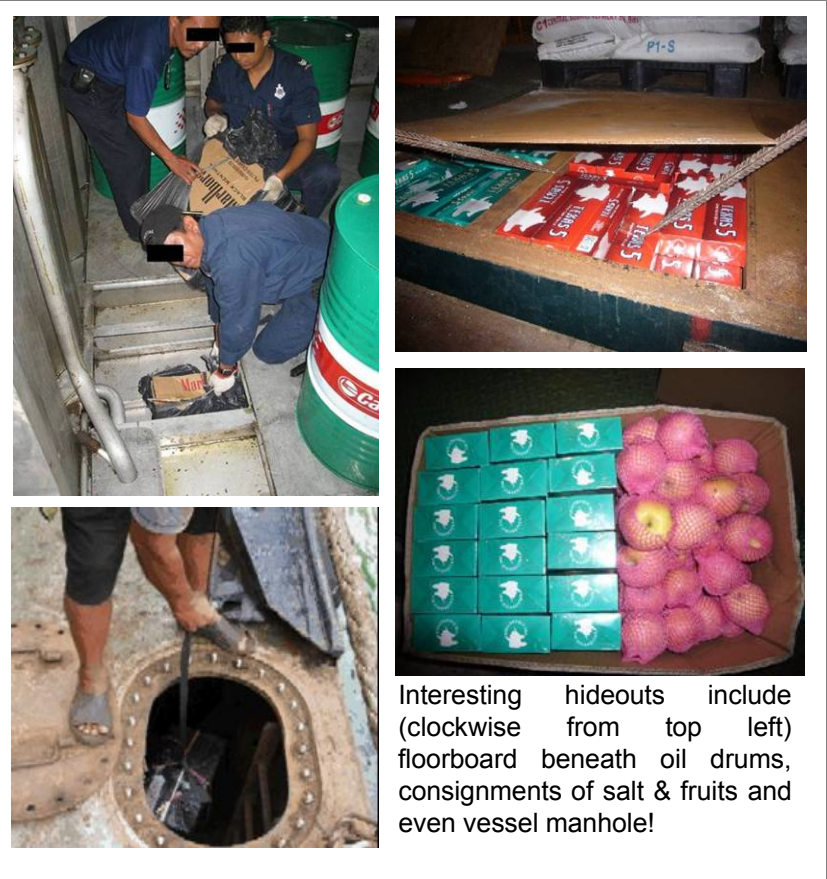
CONTRABAND smuggling detections continued to climb and has hit the 60k mark, said the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) in its latest annual report.

Bootleggers are becoming more creative in playing ‘hide-and-seek’ with the border security specialists. But no matter where the smugglers stash their illicit items, the ICA officers will continue to outwit them and foil their attempts.

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Contraband smuggling at all time high			
	2009	2010	% Change
<b>ALL CONTRABAND ITEMS</b>	<b>52,800</b>	<b>67,600</b>	<b>▲ 28%</b>
<b>Duty-unpaid cigarettes*</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>27,600</b>	<b>▲ 45%</b>
<b>Security related items*</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>9,700</b>	<b>▲ 41%</b>
<b>AVA-controlled items*</b>	<b>5,900</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>▲ 31%</b>

\* Top three categories



Interesting hideouts include (clockwise from top left) floorboard beneath oil drums, consignments of salt & fruits and even vessel manhole!



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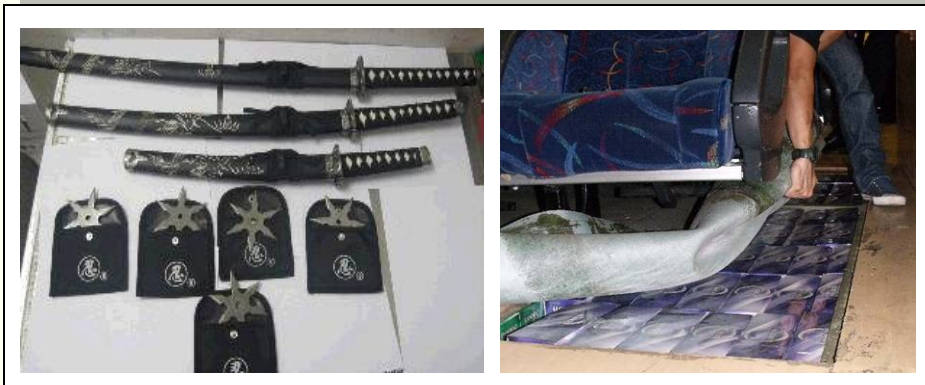
ICA wrapped up the year with a record high 67,600 detections of contraband smugglings. This is a 28 per cent jump from the 52,800 cases in 2009 and more than a three fold increase as compared to 2004, when ICA just assumed a leading role in ensuring border security.

Contraband cigarettes smuggling cases topped the chart with one in every four contraband smuggling cases detected involving duty-unpaid cigarettes. Smuggling of security-related items, such as fireworks, night sticks, flick knives and air-soft guns has also registered an increase of 41 per cent in 2010 as compared to the previous year.



The ICA officers at the checkpoints continue to take on the onerous task of keeping the island nation safe and secure through stepped up enforcement and stringent security checks at our checkpoints. These efforts are extended to checks on food products which may inadvertently import food-borne or infectious diseases into Singapore.

The unwavering vigilance of the ICA officers has been successful in helping many controlling agencies such as SPF, AVA, CNB, LTA and Singapore Customs, to intercept travellers who attempt to smuggle prohibited or controlled items into Singapore.







31 January 2011, reported by Correspondent Norah Rahmat

## STEPPED UP CHECKS AT CHECKPOINTS UNCOVERED MORE ILLEGAL SMOKES

INTENSIVE and stringent checks at the checkpoints have reaped fruitful results for the ICA as the number of duty-unpaid cigarette cases has increased by 45 per cent to 27,600 in the year 2010. This is also the highest recorded detections since 2004 when ICA assumed a lead role in border security. Duty-unpaid cigarette cases continued to form the bulk of contraband smuggling cases detected by the border security agency. The specialised training provided to the checkpoints officers have greatly enhanced their capabilities and effectiveness in detecting anomalies in vehicles stashed with the illegal smokes.



More than 1.29 million packets of cigarettes were seized last year, an increase of about 1.5 per cent as compared to the previous year. This can be attributed to the detection of more petty smuggling cases. While there were fewer large quantity seizures, the single largest haul of 98,000 packets of cigarettes was detected through the excellent cooperation of ICA and Singapore Customs on 20 April at the Woodlands checkpoint. The close collaboration between the two enforcement agencies has ensured that the contraband cigarettes situation in Singapore remains in check.

### **New modus operandi observed...**

Smugglers are never tired of coming up with ingenious ways in their attempts to outwit ICA officers at the checkpoints. From modified fuel tank, to vessel manhole, sofa seats, fruits and even beauty products, the syndicates have tried their luck to hide their loots from the officers' eagle eyes. But luck ran out on them as ICA officers relentlessly weeded them out at the borders. See news releases - 'A Christmas Carol Dedicated to the Smugglers', 'No Ware Out, 'Barged into the Wharf', and many more at [www.ica.gov.sg](http://www.ica.gov.sg) for the intriguing stories.



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31 January 2011, reported by Brenda Tham

# FIRE WORKS, AIR-SOFT GUNS, STUN GUNS & SWORDS TOPPED THE CHART



As with 2009, the Airport remains the checkpoint that detected the most number of cases of security-related items brought in by travellers. In 2010, the number of cases involving security-related items referred to the Police climbed by 41 per cent from 6,900 cases in 2009 to 9,700 in 2010.



Common security-related items seized (clockwise from top left): fire works, empty bullet cartridges, pepper sprays & samurai swords



In July, the ICA was involved in the filming of Crimewatch to educate the public on prohibited and controlled items in Singapore. In the particular segment, commonly seized and confiscated prohibited items by the ICA and Police such as stun guns, sword and nightstick were showcased.

Prohibited items such as fire works, air-soft guns, paintball guns, stun guns, pepper spray, night sticks and knuckle dusters are some of the commonly detected items. Controlled items such as domestic knives, ornamental swords, antique guns, bows and arrows as well as samurai swords are also some of the items brought in by travellers without proper licence. The ICA would like to remind all travellers that it is illegal to bring offensive weapons listed under the Arms & Explosives Act.



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31 January 2011, reported by Kong Yong Sin

### MORE TRAVELLERS CAUGHT WITH AVA-CONTROLLED ITEMS

MORE travellers are stopped at the checkpoints for bringing food products, animals, plants and other controlled items into and out of Singapore without obtaining the necessary approval from the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA), said the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority.

Those who are in doubt are advised to declare the food items to the officers at the Red Channels when travelling through the checkpoints.



Unusual AVA-controlled items seized (clockwise from top left): monitor lizard meat, dead ant larvae, dried cow ears & cobra specimens



The number of cases referred to the AVA had increased by 31 per cent to 7,700 in the year 2010. Some of the common items detected at the checkpoints include food from non-approved sources, different species of birds, ornamental fishes and animal parts which are regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Examples of such items include pangolin scales, monitor lizard meat and crocodile skulls.





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Ornamental fishes



Lion's tooth



Tiger's claw



Live birds

**Live birds are still smugglers' preferred choice...**

Mata putehs, or better known as Oriental White-Eye, ant larvae and munias are a common sight at the various checkpoints. Perhaps due to their meek behaviour and small sizes, smugglers deem them to be easy targets to be hidden and conveyed across the borders.

Following the largest haul of 1,140 songbirds concealed amongst a consignment of crickets and grasshoppers brought into Singapore at the Woodlands Checkpoint in June, ICA officers at the Singapore Cruise Centre had a brush with the little feathered ones again in September where 16kg of ant larvae and 11 live birds were uncovered in a traveller's luggage (see press releases 'A Symphony of Chirps' and 'Ruffled Feathers' at ICA website [www.ica.gov.sg](http://www.ica.gov.sg)).



Preserved cobra



Live hamsters



Crocodile's skull



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ANNUAL STATISTICS 2010  
HIGHS & LOWS

	2009	2010	% Change
<b>LOWS &gt;&gt; IMMIGRATION ARRESTS</b>			
Employers of immigration offenders	50	26	- 48%
Overstayers	3,760	2,830	- 25%
Illegal immigrants	1,800	1,430	- 21%
Harbourers of immigration offenders	80	77	- 4%
Vehicles seized	8	18	+125%
<b>HIGHS &gt;&gt; SMUGGLING CASES</b>			
<b>All contraband items</b>	<b>52,800</b>	<b>67,600</b>	<b>+ 28%</b>
• Duty-unpaid cigarettes	19,000	27,600	+ 45%
• Security-related items	6,900	9,700	+ 41%
▪ AVA-controlled items	5,900	7,700	+ 31%
• Illegal discs	980	1,100	+12%
• Controlled drugs	170	150	- 12%

As Commissioner ICA, Mr Clarence Yeo summed up,

“ ICA's remarkable results over the last 12 months have proven once again that our multi-pronged efforts in containing the immigration offender situation have been effective. While we celebrate our success, we are mindful that we are still operating in a very challenging global security landscape. Standing guard at our borders, ICA officers will stay vigilant and resolute against adversaries attempting to enter our country illegally. ”



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The ICA is committed in ensuring Singapore's border security by harnessing the strengths of our officers and innovative technologies to deliver quality service without compromising security.

As frontline ambassadors, the ICA officers are determined to stamp out smugglers' plans to convey prohibited or controlled items into Singapore as soon as they set afoot our borders. This is effectively achieved through constant joint efforts with other controlling agencies and the public.

I am proud to attribute our stellar performance to our officers who are driven by our mission, inspired by our vision and guided by our values. With a 'can do' attitude, ICA officers are dedicated in our call to duty while challenging ourselves to 'be better'. **We are also grateful for the close cooperation of our strategic partners and the support of the public. Together, we will keep Singapore safe and secure.**

said Commissioner ICA, Mr Clarence Yeo who acknowledged the crucial roles of ICA officers as well as the collaborations with our strategic partners and the community.

The number of travellers is expected to rise further with more tourist attractions in the likes of the Integrated Resorts. Thus, the ICA officers face more challenges as they need to balance immigration clearance efficiency with security checks. It is especially pertinent that the officers remain dedicated to their core duties as guardians of our borders.





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