

Tighter inspection at airports as drug rings change their routes

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SEPANG: After uncovering five cases of drug smuggling this month alone, the KL International Airport Customs has declared all air routes into Malaysia to be at high risk of being used for trafficking.

KLIA Customs [director Datuk M. Govinden](#) said syndicates had changed their usual routes into Malaysia in a bid to deceive the authorities.

“So, it does not matter where the passengers fly in from, we will have tighter inspection, and we will not only be focusing on those coming from the usual suspected drug smuggling routes,” he told reporters here yesterday.

He said the syndicates used to fly from the Gulf and India, but have now switched to flights from other countries.

Govinden said the Customs Department would beef up its manpower to tighten inspection.

He disclosed that the Customs seized 3kg of syabu worth RM750,000 from a 21-year-old Malaysian at 1.30am yesterday at KLIA. He was arrested.

“The man had just arrived from Manila. Our officers became suspicious when they scanned his luggage.

“They found a hidden compartment at the bottom of the bag covered neatly by a piece of carbon. Upon removing the cover, they found 10 packets of white powder suspected to be syabu,” he said.

The man is being remanded for seven days under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 and faces the death sentence.

Govinden said Customs seized various types of drugs weighing 116.58kg and worth RM27.896mil within three months from October this year. Twenty-four people, 14 of them foreigners, were arrested.

When contacted later, Govinden told *The Star* that luggage arriving at KLIA would be scanned twice for suspicious items, especially drugs.

He said the first scanning would be conducted before the luggage was placed on the carousels.

The second scanning, to be done before passengers are allowed to leave arrival halls, would be carried out for all flights.

“We now have two filtering processes.

“While we keep our eyes on luggage from the usual suspected routes, we also scan those arriving from the previously unsuspected routes,” he said.

Govinden said the number of officers at the airport would be increased by two “group shifts”.

On the drug trafficking case from the Philippines, Govinden said it was the fifth this month.

“The drugs are usually from Nigeria or Iran, but this is the first time we had a case from the Philippines,” said Govinden, adding that the drugs might have been brought from elsewhere into that country.

Yesterday's arrest came five days after KLIA Customs officers caught five foreigners from Cambodia and Nigeria for trying to smuggle drugs worth more than RM4mil into the country.

Last month, five Malaysians were nabbed with RM102,000 worth of ketamine and nine foreigners were picked up with RM12.5mil of syabu.

In October, five foreigners were arrested for attempting to bring in drugs worth RM11.2mil.