

Customs discover RM15.3mil in smuggled copper

By LO TERN CHERN
andylo@thestar.com.my

BUTTERWORTH: Five shipping containers declared to be carrying electronic components were instead found to contain about RM5.3mil worth of copper scrap during a Customs Department inspection at the North Butterworth Container Terminal (NBCT).

Penang Customs Department director Datuk Rohaizad Ali said enforcement officers found shreds and tubes of copper, as well as heaps of printed circuit boards (PCB), weighing a total of 125 tonnes when they opened the containers.

"On July 22, the five containers originating from Thailand were detected at the NBCT.

"They were declared as holding used electronic components such as alternators and transistors.

"However, Customs officers found them to contain copper scrap, which is classified as prohibited and subjected to the Customs Order (Import Prohibition) 2023 which requires a permit from Sirin Bhd," he said during a press conference at the department's enforcement store in Bagan Jermal yesterday.

Rohaizad said two local men and one woman, owners of a company and an agent, aged between 40 and 60, have been arrested to facilitate investigations under Section 135(1)(a) of the Customs Act 1967, pertaining to the importation of prohibited goods.

Meanwhile, in a separate case, Rohaizad said the department had crippled a contraband cigarette and liquor smuggling syndicate in early August, seizing 438,824 sticks of cigarettes and 1,377.6 litres of liquor worth RM168,395 in total and involving



Illegal imports: Rohaizad (centre) showing the copper waste and electronic boards that were falsely declared and found in the NBCT.
— LIM BENG TAT/The Star

RM366,445 in total duties.

"We raided a residential unit in a neighbourhood in Padang Serai, Kedah, which was believed to be used to store the prohibited items," he said.

However, no arrests were made

in this case, which is being investigated under Section 135(1)(d) of the Customs Act 1967 for possessing, importing or exporting goods that are subject to duty or prohibited without proper authorisation.