



## MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

15 November 2024

### **OVER 13,000 TRAVELLERS FINED MORE THAN S\$3 MILLION FOR TAX EVASION AT CHECKPOINTS IN FIRST TEN MONTHS OF 2024**

Singapore, 15 November 2024 – In the first ten months of 2024, 13,099 travellers were caught across air, land, and sea checkpoints for not declaring dutiable and taxable goods brought into Singapore. The total composition sum (penalty) imposed was S\$3,471,043. Compared to the same period in 2023, 7,193 travellers were caught and the total composition sum imposed was S\$2,303,380.

2 Customs works with the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) in conducting checks across all checkpoints to detect and deter violations. Of the total number of cases to date this year, 46 offenders were handed the maximum penalty of S\$5,000 for making incorrect or incomplete declarations to Customs.

3 Comparable to last year's findings, Customs continues to observe common violations involving goods across these categories: **(i)** Commercial goods (e.g., renovation materials, carpentry items, machinery parts); **(ii)** Apparel and Accessories (e.g., bags, clothing, mobile phones, watches); **(iii)** Health and Food Products; and **(iv)** Cigarettes and Alcohol (e.g., duty-unpaid and exceeding duty-free allowance).

4 "Evading duties and/or GST at checkpoints is a serious offence that cannot be condoned. This revenue belongs to Singapore, and its collection is essential to maintaining a level playing field for local businesses that pay these taxes," said a Singapore Customs spokesperson. "The responsibility falls on all arriving travellers to

declare all goods in their possession accurately and pay the applicable duties and/or GST. Travellers can now do this conveniently either in-person at checkpoints or digitally through the Customs@SG web application. We remain committed to enforcing compliance and will impose strict penalties on those who wilfully attempt to evade taxes due to the nation."

### **Penalties for failing to declare and pay taxes on taxable goods**

5 All goods brought into Singapore by travellers, including foreign visitors and residents, are subject to GST, regardless of any foreign sales or value-added tax paid. Under the Customs Act, any person who is in any way concerned in any fraudulent evasion of, or attempt to fraudulently evade, any customs duty or excise duty shall be guilty of an offence and will be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of duty and GST evaded or jailed for up to two years.

6 To avoid the hefty penalties and for their own convenience, we strongly encourage travellers to make an advance declaration and payment for their dutiable or GST goods up to three days before arriving in Singapore using the Customs@SG Web Application. Payment for taxes can also be made at the Customs Tax Payment Office at the various checkpoints, where Customs officers are available to assist. For detailed information on GST import relief entitlements and duty-free allowances, please visit [Singapore Customs Guide for Arriving Travellers](#).

### ***Annex: Case Highlights***

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### **About Singapore Customs**

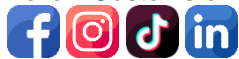
Singapore Customs, a lead agency under the Ministry of Finance, protects revenue and facilitates trade. We make trade easy, fair and secure. We ensure compliance with customs regulations and collect taxes and duties on dutiable and taxable goods. We regulate the export of strategic goods and implement Singapore's commitments to some international trade regulations such as the United Nations Security Council Sanctions.

We work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations in our mission and operations. With the use of data analytics, digitalisation of processes and various technologies, we continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes.

By proactively balancing the intricate requirements of trade facilitation, security and regulatory compliance, Singapore Customs strengthens Singapore's position as a global trade hub trusted by businesses operating in Singapore and foreign trading partners.

To find out more, visit our website at [www.customs.gov.sg](http://www.customs.gov.sg)

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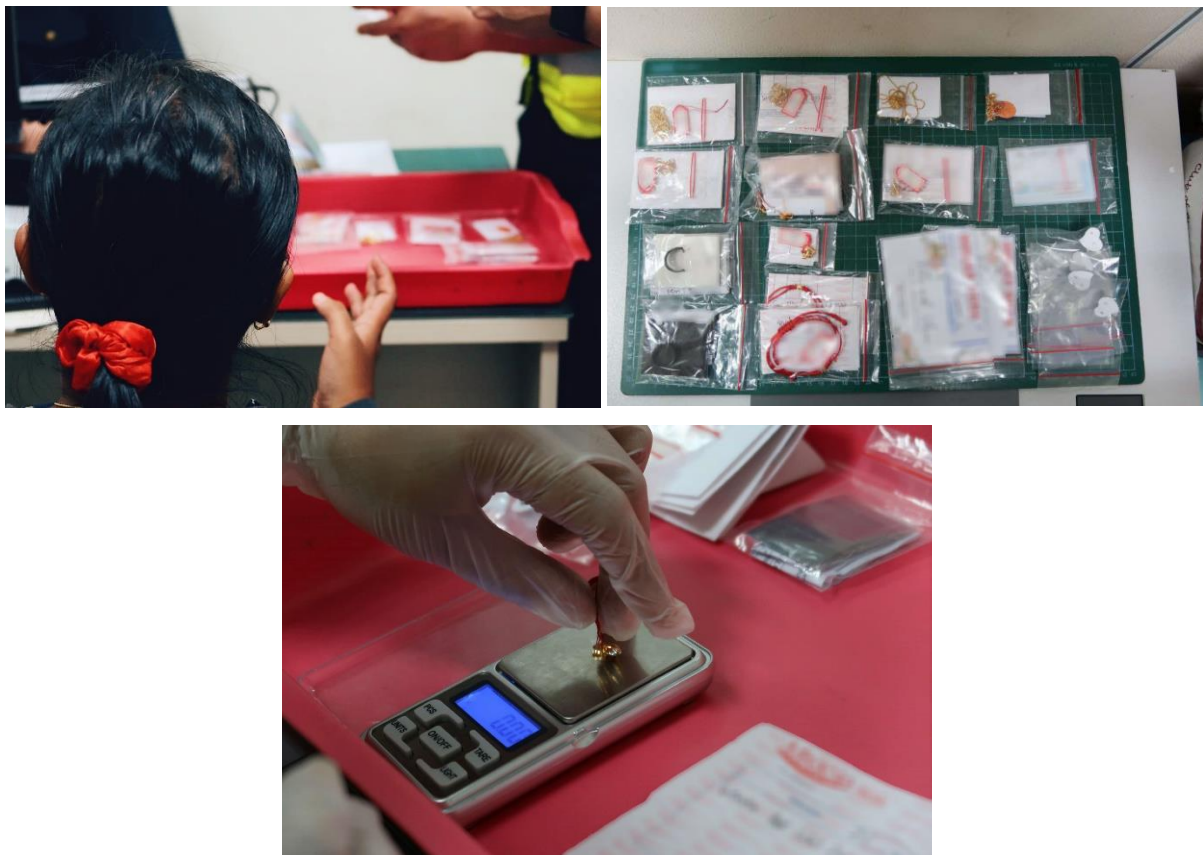
## **ANNEX**

### **CASE HIGHLIGHTS**

The following were some detections for which composition sums were imposed within the period of January 2024 to October 2024:

#### **<Case 1>:**

A female traveller was intercepted at the Singapore Cruise Centre and was found to be in possession of both new and used gold jewellery intended for commercial purposes. She was a repeat offender. A composition sum of S\$1,935 was imposed. GST of S\$96.95 was recovered for the items.



*(Undeclared new and used jewellery discovered on traveller.)*

**<Case 2>:**

A male traveller, who was couriering items on behalf of another person, was brought for further questioning after a failed transaction at the self-help Customs Declaration Kiosk at Woodlands Checkpoint. Officers discovered undeclared items across two vehicles and a further search uncovered several undeclared invoices with suppressed values. A composition sum of S\$3,920 was imposed. GST of S\$441.05 was recovered for the items.



*(Items discovered in two vehicles with suppressed values in invoices.)*

**<Case 3>:**

A female traveller flying back from a business trip in London failed to truthfully declare the goods in her possession. During a bag inspection, Customs officers discovered various undeclared branded bags and accessories (e.g., LV, Prada, YSL, Dior, Balenciaga), along with Popmart toys, including Labubu, intended as gifts. The traveller admitted she was aware of the GST relief limits but believed that only personal items required declaration. A maximum composition sum of S\$5,000 was imposed. GST of S\$ 3,963.69 was recovered for the items.