

New baggage rules in proposed budget

- A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali announced some significant changes to the baggage rules in the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2024-25. The new changes are aimed at curbing the misuse of duty-free allowances.

Among the key changes are defining gold jewelry, specification of permitted mobile phones and some other items and revoking the permission of bringing gold and cigarettes for passengers under 12 years of age.

The finance minister noted growing incidents where passengers from Middle Eastern countries attempt to evade customs duties by concealing roughly designed raw gold (24 carat) as gold jewelry.

He proposed the incorporation of a befitting definition of gold jewelry in the baggage rule.

An inbound passenger is allowed to bring gold jewelry weighing up to 100 grams without duty. This provision remains unchanged in the proposed budget, but the definition of gold jewelry has been mentioned as - designed and wearable gold ornaments made of 22-carat gold or less.

Therefore, there would be no scope to bring 24-carat gold after melting bars into bangles.

Under the existing baggage rule, a passenger is allowed to bring two mobile phones without payment of duties and taxes. The proposed budget specified that two used mobile phones are allowed without payment of duties and taxes and one new mobile phone with payment of all applicable duties and taxes.

The duty-tax rates for new mobile phones have been set at BDT 5,000, 10,000, and 25,000, depending on the phone's price.

Passengers aged below 12 years have been barred from bringing gold ornaments in the proposed budget. There was no clarification in this regard in the earlier rules.

Passengers aged 12 or above are permitted to carry up to 65 kg of baggage duty-free, while the threshold is set at 40 kg for those under 12.

They can bring 12 duty-paid and 26 duty-free products from abroad. Among the duty-paid items are 117 grams of gold bars with a customs duty of BDT 40,000 and some other items like silver bars, large televisions, a new mobile phone, home theater, refrigerator, air conditioner, dish antenna, camera, chandelier, air gun, dish washer and washing machine.

The duty-free list includes 100 grams of gold ornaments, 200 grams of silver ornaments, two used mobile phones, up to 29? televisions, desktop, laptop, computer scanner, printer, fax machine, video camera, digital camera, up to 19? LCD monitor, oven, rice cooker, sewing machine, ceiling fan, a carton of cigarettes.