

Bangladesh Bank clears use of int'l cards for air ticket purchase

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Dhaka: Bangladesh Bank has permitted resident Bangladeshis to buy outbound airline tickets using international payment cards, aiming to ease travel-related difficulties and ensure fairer pricing for passengers.

The central bank announced the decision on November 19 through a circular issued by its Foreign Exchange Policy Department to authorized dealer (AD) banks. According to the notice, travelers have frequently struggled to secure competitively priced air tickets due to the lack of international card-based payment facilities within the country.

To address this, the central bank now allows Bangladeshi nationals—holding valid visas where required—to use their international cards to purchase tickets directly from foreign or local airlines operating in Bangladesh for international routes such as Dhaka-Singapore or Dhaka-Dubai.

The permission comes with regulatory conditions. Airlines must route all proceeds from ticket sales through designated AD banks to ensure proper reporting and transparency of foreign exchange flows. These earnings will be recorded within the formal banking system as foreign currency income.

The circular also states that international cards issued under travel entitlement can be replenished by the exact amount spent on air tickets, but only after banks confirm that the ticket sale proceeds have been fully realized through domestic channels.

In addition, airlines may maintain foreign currency accounts with AD banks in Bangladesh, allowing them to hold ticket sale earnings and remit eligible surplus funds abroad in line with existing regulations.

Other rules governing the use and issuance of international cards will continue unchanged, and AD banks must follow all required reporting procedures, the circular said.

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