



PUBLIC ADVISORY FOR INDIAN NATIONALS IN THE UAE

Subject: Bringing prohibited, restricted and controlled items (including medicines) into the UAE

It has come to the notice of the Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi and Consulate General of India, Dubai & Northern Emirates that Indian nationals travelling to or residing in the UAE, including transit passengers, carrying items for personal or family use, are sometimes unaware that certain food items, medicines and other goods that are freely available or legal in India are classified as prohibited, restricted or controlled under UAE law. Carrying such items into the UAE, even unknowingly and in small quantities, can result in seizure of goods, heavy fines, detention, deportation and, in serious cases, criminal prosecution.

(i) **Prohibited and Restricted Food Items**: Indian nationals are advised that certain food items such as Poppy seeds (khus-khus); Qat (khat) leaves; Betel leaves (paan) and betel nuts (supari); Niswar (smokeless tobacco/snuff); Gutkha and similar chewing tobacco products, among others, are banned from being brought into the UAE and must not be carried in checked-in or hand baggage.

(ii) **Bringing Medicines into the UAE**: The UAE strictly regulates the import of narcotic, psychotropic and controlled medicines. Indian nationals travelling with such medicines are advised to strictly observe the following:

a) Medicines containing narcotic or psychotropic substances (e.g., certain sleeping pills, strong painkillers and psychiatric medication) are classified as controlled or semi-controlled substances. A list of such controlled and semi-controlled medicines is published by the Emirates Drug Establishment on its official website, www.ede.gov.ae.

b) Travellers carrying controlled/narcotic medicines are advised to obtain, in advance, an official Import Permit for Personal Use of Medicine through the Emirates Drug Establishment's online portal (accessible via www.ede.gov.ae). The application requires the traveller to log in with a digital identity, complete the online form and upload the prescription or a detailed medical report. Processing generally takes about one working day, and the service is free of charge. In case of difficulty, applicants may contact the Emirates Drug Establishment's helpline on 800-33784 or by email at info@ede.gov.ae.

c) Carrying controlled or narcotic medicines without a valid prescription/permit, or in quantities exceeding the permitted limit, is treated as a serious criminal offence under UAE law and may result in confiscation, arrest, prosecution and imprisonment, regardless of whether the medicine is legally prescribed in India.

(iii) **Completely banned**: Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances of all kinds; counterfeit currency and pirated goods; gambling tools, machines and devices; three-layer nylon fishing nets; items associated with black magic, witchcraft or sorcery; hazardous or radioactive-contaminated material, etc.

(iv) Restricted (require prior approval of the concerned UAE authority): Weapons, ammunition, explosives and fireworks; live animals, plants, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides; pharmaceuticals, medicines and medical equipment; publications, recorded media and broadcasting devices; wireless transmitters, communication and GPS equipment; alcoholic beverages; e-cigarettes, electronic hookahs, vehicle tyres, cosmetics and certain electrical appliances; nuclear and radioactive material; and rough diamonds.

(v) Currency declaration: Travellers carrying cash, financial instruments (such as bearer cheques), precious metals or precious stones of a combined value exceeding AED 60,000 (or the equivalent in other currencies) are required to declare the same to UAE Customs authorities at the port of entry/exit.

2. In view the above, Indian nationals travelling to or residing in the UAE are advised that:

a) Before travelling, Indian nationals should carefully check their baggage and ensure that no banned, restricted or controlled item is being carried without proper authorization/permit.

b) It is also advised that travellers should not carry luggage on behalf of other travellers or persons unless they are fully aware of the contents.

c) Travellers requiring any medicine falling in the controlled/narcotic/psychotropic category should obtain the requisite permit or carry the prescribed documentation.

d) For an up-to-date and complete list of banned and restricted items, and for the list of controlled/semi-controlled medicines, travellers are advised to consult the official websites of the Federal Customs Authority, Dubai Customs, Abu Dhabi Customs, and the Emirates Drug Establishment before travel.

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Abu Dhabi/Dubai