

New 15kg luggage limit costs flyers time and money

Chinmayi Shalya | TNN

Mumbai: Already burdened with high fares, domestic flyers are now paying through their nose for excess baggage.

With the recent reduction in free baggage limit to 15 kg from 20 kg on domestic sectors, most travellers going on a holiday are paying anywhere between Rs 1,000 and Rs 2,500 for excess baggage. Little wonder, then, that queues at airline cashier counters are getting longer than the check-in queues in peak hours.

Filmmaker Deepika Sharma, who travelled to Chandigarh last month from the city, paid Rs 2,500 for a baggage excess of 10 kg. Sharma was on her annual holiday to her hometown.

"Booking my tickets early made no sense after paying a hefty baggage allowance," Sharma said. "People going on a holiday can't have bags as light as those of a businessman travelling only for a day or two."

A staffer at a full-service carrier at the city airport said that the airline earlier kept only one cashier counter open. Now, it had opened the second counter. "Despite that, the queue is longer at the cashier counter than at the check-in desk," the official said. "We cannot reduce and charge and adjust internally anymore. Now everything is monitored by the airline."

International passengers taking domestic transfer of flights are the worst affected as the excess baggage cost zooms up because of reduction in allowance. Low-cost carriers charge Rs 200 and full-service airlines Rs 250 for every excess kilo.

The Air Passengers Associ-

NOW AND THEN

➤ Earlier, free baggage allowance offered by airlines was 20 kg per passenger. Now it is only 15 kg

➤ Earlier, airlines charged between ₹100 and ₹150 per kg of excess baggage. Now they charge ₹200 to ₹250

➤ Earlier, airline staffers would adjust small excess of baggage or reduce the quantum of excess while charging passengers; this was based on the logic that not all passengers travel with a full load and adjustments can be made. Now every passenger is charged for an excess of even 1 kg as the system is closely monitored

A TIP

Make optimum use of the 7 kg limit for cabin bags. A small suitcase carried as cabin baggage can help limit the check-in bag weight to 15 kg



ation of India (APAI) is flooded with complaints about queues to pay for an excess of even 1 kg. Many passengers said they had missed flights because of the long queues.

"Airlines are now extracting the best they can from passengers," Sudhakar Reddy from APAI said. According to independent estimates, most passengers are likely to exceed 15 kg for a seven-day holiday. The excess goes up in winter or during trips for weddings.