

Clearance of imported vehicles: Original passport, import documents made mandatory

The customs department has made submission of original passport(s) and import documents mandatory for clearance of imported vehicles, due to massive duty and tax evasion; it was learnt. According to sources, the importers in connivance with customs officials were exploiting under baggage transfer of residence and gift schemes, which was denting the local industry and national exchequer as well.

Moreover, they said that passports of overseas Pakistanis especially labour class from Gulf countries were being misused against Rs 10k to 20k to import vehicles in Pakistan and officials in concerned customs groups were clearing these vehicles against speed money.

Resultantly, auto markets (showrooms) are flooded with small cars, minivans, SUVs, etc. Sources said the rampant misuse of concessionary schemes of importing vehicles, which meant solely to facilitate overseas Pakistanis, were badly hurting local auto industry.

Moreover, sources said the Model Collectorate Customs (MCC) Appraisement East now issued a circular, directing all concerned departments to collect notarised undertaking duly signed by proprietor/signing authority of the clearing agency, export certificate, bill of lading, sales invoice, original passports, web decoding of chasis/VIN number and Goods Declaration at passport verification counter for clearance of vehicles.

They further said the chief collector customs appraisement south also noticed that Goods Declaration for clearance of vehicles under baggage scheme were being filed at low declared values, which not only result into insignificant upfront payment of duty and taxes but was also a grave violation of section 79(I) a & b of the Customs Act 1969.

Therefore, all concerned department were informed that in cases where difference between declared and assessed value was found to be more than 30 percent stern action including contravention proceedings should be initiated. Replying to a question, sources said that although the instructions were circulated, no contravention report had so far been submitted to the concerned authority so far.