

## MoCAT directs airlines, agencies to ensure fair airfares

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Dhaka : Bangladesh's Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism has issued a circular, on February 11, mandating airlines and travel agencies to ensure transparency in airfare pricing. The move is aimed at protecting passengers from overcharging while facilitating fair ticket sales.

The directive outlines several measures to ensure travelers fly at reasonable cost.

According to the circular, all ticket bookings including group reservations must include passenger's name, passport number, and a passport copy. If a ticket is not issued within three days of booking, airlines will have to automatically cancel it.

The circular also instructed that tickets blocked under group bookings before February 11 have to be confirmed within seven days with

complete passenger details. Failure to do so will result in automatic cancellation within the following three days.

The circular emphasized transparent pricing, mandating airlines and travel agencies to sell all tickets online with the fare clearly displayed on both the website and the ticket itself.

All group ticket sales must be reported to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, which will publish the pricing information on its website for public awareness.

Airlines and travel agencies are strictly prohibited from selling tickets at prices higher than those submitted to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

They must also comply with the "Tariff Filing" requirements under Rule 289 of the Civil Aviation Rules, 1984, and the approved tariff must be published on CAAB's website.

The circular instructs travel agencies to provide passengers with tickets showing the official price from the airline and to issue a receipt for the sale.

In an effort to curb price manipulation, the ministry warned that agencies found stockpiling tickets or selling them through unauthorized channels would face penalties.

Under Rule 15 of the Bangladesh Travel Agency (Registration and Control) Rules, 2022, the registration of such agencies could be suspended or cancelled.

The directive also mandated airlines and travel agencies to provide migrant workers travelling on work visas with special fares.

It instructed Biman Bangladesh Airlines, other carriers, and the Board of Airline Representatives (BAR) to take necessary measures within seven days to reduce ticket prices for expatriate workers, particularly those travelling to the Middle East and Malaysia.

To ensure fair competition and consumer safety, the ministry prohibited ticket sales through unregistered travel agencies under the Bangladesh Travel Agency (Registration and Control) Act, 2013.