

## Airfare to Saudi Arabia drops by 75pc over govt intervention: ATAB

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Dhaka: Airfares on several destinations of Saudi Arabia have dropped by 75 per cent, as the government has intervened and placed strict regulations, said Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh in a release.

Between December 2024 and February 2025, passengers were having to pay exorbitant airfares for flights from Dhaka to major Saudi Arabian cities, with prices soaring as high as BDT 190,000 under group booking schemes, according to the release.

However, thanks to the government's monitoring efforts, ticket prices have fallen drastically, with fares now available at as low as BDT 48,000 to BDT 50,000.

Some airlines are even offering air tickets on routes such Dhaka-

Dammam and Dhaka-Riyadh at prices as low as BDT 35,000, it further mentioned.

In a move to curb escalating airfares and establish market discipline, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism issued a directive on February 11, 2025, mandating stricter regulations for ticket bookings.

The circular aimed to improve transparency and reduce artificially inflated prices for destinations such as Jeddah, Madinah, Dammam, and Riyadh.

Under the new regulations, air tickets must now be booked with passenger's name, passport details, and a photocopy of the passport.

As a result, airlines have released previously blocked tickets, increasing seat availability in the computer reservation systems.

This has enabled both passengers and travel agencies to access real-time information on ticket fares and seat availability, fostering competition among airlines, leading to lower prices.

Earlier on January 26, ATAB called for intervention through a press conference, urging the government to take immediate action against soaring ticket costs and market syndication.

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