

## **Competition Commission issues notice against GSAs, travel agencies over alleged airfare manipulation**

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Dhaka: Bangladesh Competition Commission (BCC) has issued notices to several airlines' sales agents and travel agencies after finding preliminary evidence of collusion in artificially inflating air ticket prices for Middle Eastern routes.

According to the commission, the initial investigation revealed that seven General Sales Agents (GSAs) of Middle East-bound airlines and 27 travel agencies were allegedly involved in coordinated activities that created an artificial shortage of air tickets. This manipulation reportedly led to an unusual increase in ticket prices, rising by 20 percent to 50 percent.

The commission's probe suggests that these actions constitute violations of three provisions of the Competition Act, 2012.

Due to the artificial scarcity of seats, Umrah pilgrims, migrant workers, students, and expatriates have suffered significant financial losses, the

commission said.

BCC also noted that despite earlier directives, some agencies continue to engage in ticket bookings without valid passenger names and passport details, a practice that contributes to market manipulation and price distortion.

The accused agents and agencies have been summoned to appear before the commission for a hearing on the allegations. Officials said the proceedings will determine whether the parties have breached competition laws and what legal action should follow.

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