

India seeks fare data from airlines

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Dhaka: India's government has sought detailed airfare data from major airlines including IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet and Akasa Air as competition authorities probe widespread flight disruptions that hit the country in December, a government document reviewed by news agency shows.

The move comes after thousands of passengers were stranded nationwide last month when IndiGo, India's largest carrier with a market share of about 65pc, cancelled roughly 4,500 flights due to pilot shortages.

The disruptions led to sharp fare increases on some routes, prompting the government to impose temporary price caps.

India's competition watchdog, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), said in December it was proceeding against IndiGo to examine

whether the airline abused its dominant market position. IndiGo has not commented on the case.

According to a January 1 email sent by India's civil aviation regulator and reviewed by Reuters, airlines have been asked to submit average fare data for every route they operated between December 1 and 15. The information includes fares for both economy and premium economy seats.

The email was sent to IndiGo, Air India, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa Air.

The email also sought specific fare data for routes affected by the December disruptions.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which oversees aviation safety, and the CCI did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment on the private communication.

Akasa declined to comment, while the other airlines did not respond.

A government source, who declined to be named as they were not authorised to speak publicly, said the fare data had been requested at the CCI's behest to help assess pricing patterns across airlines during the period of disruption.

There is no indication at this stage that the investigation has been expanded to include airlines other than IndiGo.

One complaint under review by the CCI alleges that IndiGo cancelled flights and later sold seats at significantly higher prices, potentially constituting an abuse of its dominant position, news agency previously reported.

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