

Upper cap on airfares need of hour: Parl panel

PTI ■ NEW
DELHI

An upper cap on airfares in each sector is the need of the hour to discourage predatory pricing ways of airlines, a Parliamentary panel said on Friday.

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture asked the Civil Aviation Ministry to make concerted efforts consistently to “prevail upon different airlines not only to make available more and more low-fare bucket seats, but also to keep the airfares at minimum affordable level for the benefit of common man”.

There have been concerns in various quarters about high airfares even as the ministry has been maintaining that air ticket prices are neither controlled nor approved by the Government.

“The committee strongly feels that an upper cap of airfare in each sector is the need of the hour to discourage the airlines from predatory pricing of air tickets,” the panel said in its report tabled in Parliament.

According to the committee, the ministry has taken refuge in global practices in fix-



ing the luggage charges and uncontrolled airfares, which is a faulty premise.

“... The Indian conditions and need of the people should be given due consideration while regulating the airfares and luggage charges.

“The committee recommends that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and DGCA should come forward to regulate baggage charges and airfares in such a way to facilitate and benefit the air passengers,” the report said.

Further, the panel reiterated its earlier recommendation that the airlines must be restricted to charging not more than 50 per cent of the base fare as cancellation charges.

Regarding instances of discourteous and aggressive behaviour of airlines staff, the committee said it “desires that the ministry shall ensure that strictest possible action is taken against unruly staff and heavy penalties imposed on them”.