

CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

Ref: F. No. J – 25/25/2021 – CCPA

In the Matter of: Suo Moto case against Yatra Online Limited (herewith also referred as "Company").

CORAM:

NIDHI KHARE, CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Dated: 27.06.2024

ORDER

1. In continuation of previous order dated 14.02.2024, hearing was held on 25.06.2024 with the Counsels, Ms. Ashu Joshi, Senior Manager (Legal), Mr. Prakash Harpalani, Vice president (Air product), Mr. Rajesh Bhanot, Chief Customer Experience Officer (operations) for Yatra Online Limited (Company) and Ms. Geeta Verma for Air Arabia over VC.
2. The Company submitted their current status of pending refunds indicating the status of pendency due from Airlines as of June 21st, 2024 as below:

Date of Response	Total number of bookings for which refund is pending due from Airlines	Total number of bookings for which original mode of payment has expired and the Company has reached out to customers for bank details.	Total No. of Bookings pending for refund
January 22 , 2024	No. of bookings: 127 Amount in INR: 38,84,614/-	No. of bookings: 5,235 Amount in INR: 2,68,20,026/-	No. of bookings: 5,362 Amount in INR: 3,07,04,640/-

March 12 , 2024	No. of bookings: 115 Amount in INR: 36,48,114/-	No. of bookings: 5,134 Amount in INR: 2,50,27,848/-	No. of bookings: 5,249 Amount in INR: 2,86,75,962/-
April 28, 2024	No. of bookings: 105 Amount in INR: 33,24,767/-	No. of bookings: 4,940 Amount in INR: 2,34,05,648/-	No. of bookings: 5,045 Amount in INR: 2,67,30,415/-
May 31, 2024	No. of bookings: 99 Amount in INR: 32,11,680/-	No. of bookings: 4,811 Amount in INR: 2,25,71,968/-	No. of bookings: 4,910 Amount in INR: 2,57,83,648/-
June 21, 2024	No. of bookings: 98 Amount in INR: 31,79,069/-	No. of bookings: 4,739 Amount in INR: 2,21,08,029/-	No. of bookings: 4,837 Amount in INR: 2,52,87,098/-

3. The company during the hearing held on 25.06.2024 submitted as follows:
- Its communication initiatives reduced the pendency from 36,276 as per their response dated 23.07.2021 to 4,837 as on 21.06.2024.*
 - In compliance of the directions of CCPA order dated 22.11.2023 regarding making calls through National Consumer Helpline (NCH) to the remaining passengers regarding the pending refunds, the Company executed an agreement dated 02.02.2024 with Tele calling agency referred by NCH i.e. OneCX Tech services Private Limited and such agreement was valid for two months from the effective date 2nd February 2024 which got expired on 03.06.2024. It is submitted that calling activity has been initiated on 04.04.2024 by a Tele-calling agency working with NCH. Further, till 27.04.2024 such agency has attempted calling consumers multiple times on 3647 unique numbers out of which 1527 numbers were contactable.*

- c) *Yatra further submitted the calling activity done by Tele-calling agency i.e., OneCX in which the agency has attempted calling consumers multiple times on 3647 numbers out of which 1986 numbers were connected out of which 160 consumers got refunded.*
- d) *For two months, Yatra has spent approximately 7 lakhs which is a substantial amount on these dedicated calls made to the consumers.*
- e) *Yatra has been following up with few airlines in which they have denied the refund stating that the tickets got purged or tickets are old. These are 14 tickets who denied for refund which amounts to Rs. 31,79,023 and further Yatra requested the airlines that treat as a special case but the airlines still denied.*
- f) *However, Yatra vide its e-mail dated 22.05.2024 submitted that as per information shared by the Tele-calling agency, namely OneCX Tech services Private Limited working with National Consumer helpline (NCH), the count of 1527 reflects the count of contact numbers on which calls got connected. It does not reflect that the refunds were processed to 1527 customers.*
- g) *Further, till 31.05.2024 such agency has attempted calling consumers multiple times on 3647 unique numbers out of which 1986 numbers were contactable out of which 160 consumers have received refund.*
- h) *In view of the above Yatra (travel agency) has taken appropriate initiatives based on the directions of CCPA to contact consumers via Tele-calling agency of NCH. It is further submitted by Yatra that they have put the activity of calling on hold as the agreement executed between NCH and Tele-calling agency i.e OneCX Tech services Private Limited got expired on 03.06.2024.*
- i) *Total pendency is 2.5 crores out of which the pendency to be received from airlines is approximately 32 lakhs and out of this amount, 22 lakhs have been denied by the 14 airlines.*

- j) *The Company has approached the customers through multiple channels and almost every week via social media profiles, e-mails and text messages.*
- k) *The updated status of refunds will be provided to the Central Authority within a week.*

4. The Counsel for Air Arabia stated that:

“Out of 9 bookings pending for refunds, 6 PNRs are pending for refunds as in one PNR 4 passengers are included and the entire bookings belong to Indians, some of them have booked through third party i.e., travel agents. The money has not been refunded to travel agents but the airline is ready to pay. The full details of these passenger such as from where did they book the ticket, whether the payment was done through credit card or through other mode”.

5. In view of the above, the Central Authority issues the following directions:

- a. The Company shall expeditiously resolve the refunds pertaining to 98 pending tickets, totaling Rs. 31,79,069/-, owed by airlines. The Company shall provide a final summary of information in tabular format, including:
 - Name of the passenger
 - Booking origin
 - Intermediary (if any)
 - Detailed explanation of which airline has denied the refund.
- b. The Company shall prioritize resolution of issues with airlines where the majority of refunds are pending, specifically Ethiopian Airlines and Etihad Airways.
- c. The Company shall proactively engage with the remaining 4837 bookings, amounting to Rs. 2,52,87,098/-, to promptly resolve their refunds.

- d. However keeping in view of the submissions given by the Company which may include coordination with the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) wherein calls can be made by the Tele-calling agency of National Consumer Helpline (managed by Department of Consumer Affairs) to these passengers. Therefore, the Company is directed to make suitable arrangements at National Consumer Helpline (NCH) by allotting dedicated 5 seats exclusively for two months which shall make calls to the remaining 4837 passengers clearly informing them that the pending refund will be processed by the Company whose refunds are pending due to cancelled air tickets of Covid-19 Lockdown. The details of these passengers along with the contact details will be shared by Yatra. The cost incurred towards this calling process by NCH in engaging 5 persons will be entirely paid by Yatra and that amount shall be given directly to the agency managing the NCH.
- e. The Company shall submit a final compliance report to the Central authority within 60 days from the date of receiving this communication.

These directives are issued with immediate effect to ensure timely resolution and compliance by Yatra Online Limited.



(Nidhi Khare)

Chief Commissioner