

## Airlines urged to offer incentives to promote inbound tourism

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Dhaka : The local airlines of Bangladesh should ensure sufficient incentives to lure more inbound tourists to Bangladesh, urged aviation stakeholders at a seminar, titled "Role of the Aviation Industry in Bangladesh Tourism Development: Prospects and Challenges," jointly organised by ATAB and Bangladesh Tourism Board at BICC on September 29.

"Air ticket prices are a very important factor in bringing foreign tourists to Bangladesh. However, the high price of tickets has become a regular phenomenon," said Afsia Jannat Saleh, Vice-President, Association of Travel Agents Bangladesh while addressing the seminar.

Afsia stressed that the local airlines of the country should encourage their General Sales Agents (GSAs) to promote Bangladesh abroad and not target ticket sales only within the country.

AKM Bari, former Secretary General, ATAB, said, "We have seen that Indonesia played a great initiative to attract tourists after the Bali attack in 2002 by offering special discount packages where airlines played a huge role."

"Our airlines should declare special packages to attract inbound travellers similarly," he added.

However, Kamrul Islam, General Manager (Public Relation), US-Bangla Airlines, said, "If the operational costs of airlines are not reduced, it would be quite tough to give a discount on the ticket price."

Abdus Salam Aref, Secretary General of ATAB was the keynote presenter at the seminar.