

## ATAB urges three aviation stakeholders to ensure smooth air travel

A Monitor Report

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Dhaka : Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (ATAB) presented three demands to three different stakeholders with a view to ensuring a smooth air travel experience for passengers while encouraging agencies to conduct business in a responsible and efficient manner without any violation of regulations.

The three stakeholders are as follow Biman Bangladesh Airlines, China Southern Airlines, and Saudi Arabian Airlines.

ATAB wrote two letters to Biman's Managing Director and CEO, the Country Manager of Saudi Arabian to take effective steps to operate additional flights to accommodate and transport Umrah passengers from Bangladesh.

The agency highlighted the ongoing issue with the insufficient flight options available for Dhaka to Jeddah and Medina routes.

They have suggested that adding more flights from March 1 to April 23, 2023 would alleviate the inconvenience experienced by Umrah pilgrims in booking their tickets. The agency also demanded a reasonable decrease in airfares.

ATAB also wrote a letter to China Southern Airlines on February 18, urging them to eliminate the additional cash deposit requirement imposed on travel agents, citing a violation of proper business policies by the airline.

The association criticised the airline's policy, saying, according to reports, "It is totally illogical, unjustified and a big burden to the travel agencies."

"As the travel agencies follow IATA bank guarantee policy, so there is no need to implement or illegally impose new trade policy by the china southern airline and force extra cash deposits from travel agents," read the letter signed by ATAB Secretary General Abdus Salam Aref, as per reports.

If the airline does not lift the policy it might hamper their business in Bangladesh and will tarnish the airline's reputation as well, the letter added.

The travel association platform also called on the airline to ensure fair distribution of tickets among IATA-permitted travel agents, rather than facilitating ticket manipulation through ticket syndicates and causing the prices to increase.