

OTAs to play vital role in BD travel market, say experts at seminar

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Dhaka: Keeping pace with the development of technology and global trend, the Bangladesh travel market is expected to experience exponential growth in online management of customers' travel needs. But this new phenomenon needs policy support and strict monitoring from the government for its proper and healthy growth.

Such observations were shared by the speakers at a seminar titled 'Travel and Technology: Emergence of OTAs in Bangladesh' held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, in the capital on March 9.

The seminar was organised by the premier aviation and travel publication [The Bangladesh Monitor](#) with support from City Bank Ltd, Eastern Bank Ltd, Global Distribution Systems like Sabre, Galileo, and Amadeus.

The day-long seminar, first of its kind, was held in two sessions and was addressed by Major General Ibne Fazal Shayekhuzzaman, Director, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Chairman, Sabre Travel Network (Bangladesh) Ltd; Rizwan Rahman, President, DCCI; Monsur Ahmed Kalam, President, ATAB; M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, President, [HAAB](#); and Almas Kabir, President, [BASIS](#), among others.

Two keynote papers were presented at the seminar, one on Emergence of OTAs in Bangladesh by Kazi Wahidul Alam, Editor of The Bangladesh Monitor, and the other on Travel and Technology by Tina Jabeen, Managing Director and CEO of Startup Bangladesh Ltd.

Kazi Wahidul Alam in his keynote paper noted that Online Travel Agencies started coming up in Bangladesh in 2017 and presently over 50 OTAs are functioning in the country. According to a prediction made in 2019, OTAs market share is supposed to be over 45 percent by 2025. Today, OTAs are not only providing ticket booking services but hotel booking and visa processing and other relevant services as well.

Wahidul Alam opined that with a population of 164.5 million, 58 percent internet penetration, USD 2 billion worth e-commerce market, 1.90 million bank transfers a month, 685,000 daily card transactions, 40,000 online orders per day, USD 97.4 million digital payment a year, and 9.5 million of transactions per day through mobile financial services with a total transaction amount of USD 173.5 million per day, OTAs are expected to flourish exponentially in the coming years.

Besides, the seminar hosted two separate panel discussions participated by representatives from airlines, GDS companies, financial institutions, and OTAs, among others.