

Air India's security confusion unending

Bangalore bound passengers 'cleaned out'

By A Staff Reporter

Passengers on Air India continue to be confused by the security regulations from GCC stations to Indian destinations.

Some flights take off without precautions while others are put through the paces. Although the orders include Bahrain the secondary check is still not fully operational and passengers have had an easier time. But for those who are going through Dubai and making connections face a hard time with their Bahrain-bought purchases.

The latest 'clean up' occurred on the Dubai-Bangalore AI 770 flight yesterday. This is a popular flight for people from here because they can take a connector to Dubai and then catch the afternoon direct aircraft to Bangalore.

But the irritation levels rose yesterday when the secondary check pulled out all liquids from passengers including perfumes. Some passengers called *Bahrain Tribune* to complain that there had been no warning at check-in and many of them were parted from gifts before entering the plane.

One lady traveller, said she specifically asked if it was okay to buy and was told that it was. The blurriness of the rules is resulting in the throwing away of thousands of dinars worth of duty free goods because they cannot be sent back to the complex nor is there anyone to 'keep' them in custody for passengers to reconcile with their possessions on return. One passenger who had a relative told the paper that she had given her duty free goods to a friend who happened to be on duty at the airport and was hopeful that he could give it back to the duty free shop and get her money back.



DISAPPOINTMENT: What is the use of buying from a duty free shop if you are not allowed to take the goods home?

"The mood here is dark and angry," she said. "Why can't they just have a sign at the airport to tell people what their rules are."

Ironically, the rules have supposedly

been lifted but that did not seem to have seeped down to some of the flights. Even more ironically, Indian (formerly Indian Airlines) continues to fly the same routes without having to impose these rules.

Nobody in the Ministry of Aviation has been able to explain the anomaly and the Air India headquarters in Mumbai expressed their 'inability to help'...more likely simply helpless.

The message is clear, and effective

Sandeep Singh Grewal
Contributor

It was a simple idea conceived by Bahrain's favourite blogger Mahmood who first posted the image that has now become the talk of the town. The downloadable image shows a Bahraini flag with a powerful message that states "No Shi'i (Shia), No Sunni... Just Bahraini."

The idea was further developed after many bloggers and visitors downloaded the file. Buttons were made and distributed which became instantly popular among the youth of Bahrain.

"The message is clear and effective which is required in these times where we should not discriminate against anyone but promote national unity in the Kingdom," said Mohammed Jassim, a blogging enthusiast.

"I first wore the button, and my friends just loved the whole concept with some of them making bumper stickers for their cars carrying the message."

The issue of unity between the two sects is also one of the main issues this year that candidates contesting for the elections are focusing on.

"It is time we forget what

has happened in the past and live together like a family that will understand each other. Many have taken advantage of dividing the two groups which if united would be powerful and effective," said Fatima Jamal, a college student.



In a reply via e-mail, Mahmood told the *Tribune* that the first 200 buttons were finished in a day due to the increasing demand, and they have ordered another consignment.

The blogger further said the Just Bahraini campaign craze shows there is a healthy, anti-sectarian attitude in the Kingdom. They also plan to expand the campaign by embossing the message on T-shirts, mugs, bracelets and other gift items and are looking for sponsors which could help them in their endeavour.

Meet on Sunday to highlight labour rights of KG teachers

Suad Hamada
Staff Reporter

Problems in the kindergarten sector will be the focus of a meeting on Sunday that aims to discuss mechanisms to protect the labour rights of those, mainly teachers, working in the sector.

Deputy general secretary of the Bahrain General Federation for Trade Unions Jaffar Mahfood said the meeting would be attended by representatives from BGFTU, the ministries of Labour and of Education and some owners of pre-schools.

The meeting would mainly tackle a labour law violation against nursery school teachers when hiring them under the nine-month contract system forcing them to remain without wages throughout summer and living in fear that they would not be called by their employers at the beginning of the new academic year. The deputy general secretary said that to increase profits kindergarten owners had started the contract idea to avoid paying salaries



HOW FAIR IS IT?: Many KG teachers don't get salary for vacation, and they are not sure whether they will get back the job when they return.

during summer vacation.

"The system could be a good idea for cost cutting but it is a great violation of the labour rights of teachers as, after all, they are fulltime employees as most of them would be called back after summer vacation but constrained to take two unpaid months' leave."

Mahfood said teachers were deprived of their basic rights of being under the umbrella of the

General Organisation for Social Insurance (Gosi). He said BGFTU had requested Minister of Labour Dr Majeed bin Mohsen Al Alawi to include teachers in the labour law, covering them with social insurance of Gosi as well as constrain owners to have new contracts that safeguard the interests of employees during summer. "Teachers are important contributors to the literacy movement, and, instead of

receiving incentives from the government, they are being deprived of their basic rights of annual leave and maternity and breastfeeding privileges," he said.

Mahfood said it was easy to correct the situation of the teachers as their number does not exceed 1,000, especially in opening accounts for them with Gosi. "All pre-schools started their businesses with this licences issued by the Ministry of Education while such permits are not enough to operate legally these institutions which should have commercial registration."

The deputy general secretary recommended either merging all nursery schools with the Ministry of Education to be protected by the civil service laws or make it obligatory for owners to issue CRs to protect employees under the labour law. BGFTU has been fighting for better rights for teachers including pushing for a contract providing more labour privileges to employees.

The Kingdom has 154 kindergartens managed by companies and individuals.

TENT amount to traffic violation?



AYLA MARISSA G. GINETE

MOBILE CANOPY: But an innovative, attractive sight on the largely deserted roads anyway. This 'portable' tent was 'roped in' by our reporter as she turned a corner and fell in behind the mobile canopy.

Restoring credibility of nursing profession

Ayla Marisse G Ginete
Contributor

The Philippines is now facing tremors, not with another typhoon but with a controversy about the leakage of last June's nurses' licensure examination. The scandal has rocked the country's medical profession casting a shadow over the quality and credibility of its nurses who are in high demand overseas, especially in the US, Europe and the Middle East. Bahrain-based Filipino nurses are appalled, expressing concern over the recent decree announced by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and her cabinet ordering a mass retake of the exams.

Carlo Casal, an emergency nurse, expressed his opinion about the justified re-doing of the test. "The credibility and integrity of the nursing medical profession hang in the balance with this issue. It is but justified for the mass resitting for the examination if, in turn, it restores the questionable credibility of the ones who passed," he said. "Nurses are one of our country's major professional exports. The world looks with a watchful eye at the Philippine decisionmakers on the resolution of the scandal. Sitting for the exam once again will ensure not only their future but succeeding students in future," he said.

Some have differing opinions about resitting the tests, like Cesar Ladameo, an army nurse who feels that retaking could be an "unfair" move to everyone involved, especially for students. "A retake for what? Even if the proposed resitting is only for two portions of the exam, I feel it hardly seems fair at all. It does no justice to students, parents, passers or flunkers. There has been a lot

of sacrifice made by these people. The financial and emotional investment is too a high price for them to repeat the procedure.

"It is double the financial burden and triple the anxiety these students will face. It is not just the exam that is targeted here. The years and time exerted for nursing education may be in jeopardy here. It is back to the think tank for GMA (Arroyo) and her cabinet on this one," Ladameo said.

Similarly, Frances Salazar, who took the exam 15 years ago and now a construction-site nurse, shares the same opinion on the resitting debate. "There is really no debate on this issue. Retake is the only safe answer. And there is no real fear for these students just as long as they know what they had studied. I have always believed in stocked knowledge with this. They will be able to re-write this exam at any given time. What I disapprove are the extraordinary fees these review centres tag students with. This is what the government should investigate."

The retake would cover only tests 3 and 5 at no cost to examinees. Those exams were identified as having some leaked questions.



Carlo Casal



Cesar Ladameo



Frances Salazar

Fruits are in high demand

Fruit market is booming this week as crowds are flocking at fruit stalls to get their best bargain. As days are closing in on Eid Al Fitr, the stocks are exhausting faster, people are stocking fruits

keeping in mind that prices will rise by the end of Ramadan.

Apples from Chile and France are the people's favourite this week. The varieties are famed for their succulence and crunchiness



NOOR MOHAMED

Market Talk

by Hanna George

making a scrumptious combination. So this week just don't think of mouth-watering apple-pie but instead grab a kg priced at BD1,500 and indulge in fresh home-made ones.

Lemonade lovers are in for a grand time as price of the African lemon has slumped yet again. With stocks aplenty vendors are reducing the costs to sell the citrus fruit, earlier costing BD4,500 for 15kg now priced at a reasonable BD3,500. The stocks arrived two weeks back but due to the increase in prices a very modest quantity was sold.

The Syrian sweet melon stocks are soon to disappear from fruit market as the season will end shortly. This will result in the

increase in the price of the Saudi and Jordanian stocks that will be the only ones available in the market. Last week a kg was priced at BD1,200, slightly increasing during this week costing BD1,500 for the same quantity.

However, among all fruits available in the market the price for watermelon is escalating as the season is almost at an end. The price of the fruit is increasing as the majority of supplies come from Saudi Arabia. A pick-up full of watermelons weighing roughly 1,200 kg is priced at BD180, earlier costing BD160 for the same quantity. Prices are predicted to rise further within the coming weeks, so enjoy as much as you can before the stocks exhaust and you have to wait until next summer to taste the sweet and refreshing fruit.