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(Drukair Corporation Limited)

September 27, 2015

Press Release

Drukair – Royal Bhutan Airlines would like to express its grave concern regarding a recent post on the social media on a medical incident that took place onboard its flight KB158 bound to Bangkok on September 25, 2015. Drukair very sincerely sympathizes with the patient and his families for the difficulties they had to encounter. We are indeed extremely sorry for the incident and the decision that was taken is in no way to indicate our sense of discrimination to the patient. The difficult situation that led to such a decision that appeared in humane, however, needs to be informed to the general public.

1. The passenger was suffering from chronic nose ulcer and sinusitis. Though a medical certificate was issued by the doctor practicing privately, the smell factor was not mentioned in the medical certificate.
2. After the patient was boarded there was pungent odor permeating inside the aircraft cabin, which caused a huge unrest among the passengers with some even refusing to take their seats. The Pilot-in-Command noticed that many passengers started exiting the aircraft while some lined up to visit the washroom to vomit.
3. The Pilot-in-Command after carefully examining the medical certificate called the doctor who issued the certificate and upon hearing the problem onboard, he verbally revoked the medical certificate of the patient.
4. Normally the Pilot-in-Command has the responsibility to de-board the patient who is declared unfit to fly by the doctor. Yet purely on humanitarian grounds the Pilot-in-Command tried to help the patient but he could not as some of the passengers had started raising complaints. He explained to the patient's escort that subject to unanimous decision by rest of the passengers, he was willing to accept the patient. Drukair would like to clarify that under no circumstance a voting was done as stated in the social media but only sought general consensus from the rest of the passengers.
5. While some expressed their willingness to tolerate the situation, most were unsure and few were totally refusing to accept. Few passengers were disembarking and few standing on the stairs, remaining non-committal. Under such circumstances any airline would have viewed such mixed response a potential threat to a four hour flight as the pungent odor would have gotten worse once the aircraft door close. The passengers who were already complaining would have made more noise in the air. This could have led to an imminent mid-air rage forcing the Pilot-in-Command to make an emergency landing, compromising with the safety and security of not only



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the rest of the passengers and crew but the patient himself. Therefore, in fear of a mass medical hysteria the Pilot-in-Command had acted in the larger interest of the 109 passengers and 7 crew onboard and had to take the unpopular decision to de-board the patient.

Captain's decision to de-board the patient was difficult and also appeared inhumane. However, such an unpopular decision had to be taken by the Pilot-in-Command as there was no other choice. Unfortunately a lot of concerns were expressed among our customers through the social media but we would like to assure all that we value each and every passenger irrespective of his or her status and therefore see no reason to discriminate any passengers. As the National Flag Carrier we remain committed to serve all the customers in general and the Bhutanese citizens in particular. We wish the patient was handled by the J.D.W.N.R.H, which would have avoided undesirable situation.

As an instance of our care even after having de-boarded the patient, Drukair coordinated to collect cash donations from the passengers of flight KB158 and handed it over to the patient's wife (i.e USD 1709, SGD 128, Euro 50, THB 4000, YEN 2000 and Nu. 7462). The manager of Drukair offered discounted charter flight for 26th September as the charter flight on the same day was not possible due to requirement of aeronautical clearance from several countries. The daughter of the patient took the information and agreed to get back after consulting her family members, after which the airline has not heard from her instead posted the incomplete story in the social media.

While we understand that the patient and family members might have faced difficulties, we would like to assure all our customers that the decision was taken in the larger interest of the safety and security of the entire passengers onboard.

Any inconvenience caused is highly regretted.



Drukair Corporation Ltd.