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Slogan slated

EASYJET has poked fun at British Airways' new marketing campaign with a poster on its Facebook page that features the slogan 'To Fly. To Save'. It is mimicking BA's 'To Fly. To Serve' motto, which is featured in the airline's new campaign.

BA unveiled the campaign, which focuses on the flag carrier's heritage, on Facebook last week.

Referring to its own slogan, the easyJet poster reads: "When we launched 15 years ago, those four words summed up what we believed in. And they still do."

"We don't need to paint them on our tailfins like some advertising slogan. That would just be a waste of your money."

Low fares pay off

THE European Low Fares Airlines Association (ELFAA) has announced its members have once again bucked the global economic trend by carrying significantly more passengers.

Between July 2010 and June 2011, the number of passengers on ELFAA airlines increased from 172 million to 183 million, an increase of 10 per cent on the previous year.

In addition, the average occupancy factor increased by 1.4 per cent and the number of employees shot up by 12.1 per cent on the previous year.

ELFAA secretary general John Hanlon said: "While other carriers have bemoaned falling passenger numbers and share in recent years, low-cost airlines continue to go from strength to strength, carrying more passengers than ever before."

Two more jets

BRITISH Airways has exercised options to buy two more Boeing 777-300ER long-range jetliners.

The two planes, which will be delivered in 2013, have a list price of \$568million and BA already operates six of the twin-jets.

With the BA order, Boeing's total of 777-300ER orders stand at 535, making it the best-selling model in the 777 range.

The 777-300ER accommodates 365 passengers in a typical, mixed-class configuration and has a range of more than 9,100 miles.

**HITTING
£3,000
TARGET**

A PROFESSIONAL darts player who is also a retail consultant at Heathrow has raised thousands of pounds for cancer charities

Rohit Rabadia, a Blackjack Promotions employee, held a 24-hour darts marathon with nine friends, raising about £3,000, which will be split between Cancer Research and Macmillan.

Rohit, the first Asian on the British Darts Organisation (BDO), organised the event. His fellow players took to the boards in four-hour sessions at Chiswick Memorial Club last Friday.

The next day, supporters turned up to watch an exhibition match



MARATHON: Rohit Rabadia (far right) with fellow players
Contributed

between Dean Winstanley, current BDO number one, and Stephen Bunting, world youth champion, who have both lost family or friends through cancer.

Rohit said: "The hardest part of the marathon was from 3am to 11am, when the majority of the spectators had gone home to freshen up."

"I would like to thank everyone who turned up to watch, bought raffle tickets and food, and not just the players who took part. This was a team effort and without everyone this would not have been possible."

● For pictures of the event, see www.rohitrabadia.com, or to donate see www.virginmoneygiving.com/rohitrabadia.

Safety row over 'big buggy' ban

by Salina Patel

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A ROW has developed after a baggage handling company stopped employees from taking buggies to arrival gates in a health and safety dispute.

Menzies Aviation, which carries out ground handling for airlines at Terminal 1 including Lufthansa, BMI, and SWISS, said workers could be injured bringing strollers from the plane to the gate because of the terminal's poor infrastructure.

Parents would therefore be forced to carry toddlers and small children from the aircraft gates to the baggage hall in a walk that can be up to half a mile long.

To date, no other baggage handler has enforced such health and safety restrictions. However, because other handlers have continued to provide

a full service, Menzies has decided buggy deliveries can be made to the gate, but only if they do not exceed 5kg.

John Henderson, Menzies Aviation general manager at Heathrow, said: "Menzies Aviation faces a number of unique challenges with airport infrastructure in Terminal 1.

"Many of the jetty-served stands do not have a lift/elevator. Repatriating a passenger with any piece of luggage at a gate which is not served by a lift, requires the ramp agent to manually handle the item up or down a stairwell.

"We understand that in other terminals at Heathrow Airport the majority, if not all, of jetty-served stands have a serviceable lift, which enables the handling agent to repatriate baby buggies irrespective of size without any risk of manual handling injury.

"We continue to push the airport to improve the infrastructure in Terminal 1 to eliminate the risk of manual handling injury."

Menzies said it conducted a number of risk assessments with airline customers, with independent verification from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and British Safety Council.

The outcome, agreed by stakeholders, was that buggies and pushchairs of 5kg or less would be delivered on any stand in T1, when requested, whether served by a lift or not. However, if strollers exceed the limits, parents will have to carry toddlers from the aircraft gates, through walkways to immigration and the baggage reclaim area.

● What do you think about the health and safety rules? Call Salina Patel on 07909 532 448 or email salinapatel@trinitysouth.co.uk.

what's making
airport news

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with Jonathan
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THE issue of Air Passenger Duty (APD) has been filling column inches for months and this week was no exception.

It has been reiterated on a number of occasions that Britain imposes the highest taxes on flying in the world, at a level 8.5 times higher than the average in the rest of Europe.

While many groups have been campaigning to see APD reduced, the government had put forward proposals for a 10 per cent rise in APD for 2012.

It may therefore have been a surprise to many this week when the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced a reduction on APD for long-haul flights from Northern Ireland.

Although he was quick to point out that Northern Ireland faced a 'unique challenge in attracting traffic', the move will undoubtedly be used as ammunition for those opposing the tax.

Indeed, Virgin Atlantic and BAR UK, among others, have already claimed that the move, aimed at 'stimulating and rebalancing' Northern Ireland's economy, should be rolled out across the country.

In many ways the government's decision to cut APD on long-haul flights from Northern Ireland can be seen as a U-turn and an admission that the tax is stifling some areas of the economy.

But while economic growth is clearly desirable, is the Chancellor really likely to be willing to give up such a lucrative revenue stream?

Whether APD is to be increased or not will be addressed by Mr Osborne in a speech in two months' time and it is likely there will be many people waiting for the outcome with bated breath.