

The column everyone is reading – on Sundays and Tuesdays..!

As the traffic on the highway piled up like boxcars in a shunting yard and we eventually came to a halt, it was not hard to tell there was a problem up ahead. There was no column of black smoke like the ones I used to see in those old Western movies, which signified that in "those tar rocks" trouble was waiting. No, it was not a tyre pyre this time, but once again something manmade nonetheless. An accident? A sporadically guided missile run amok perhaps? Maybe a speeding weaver, a tailgater, a mobile phoner-cum-texter steering a car with their knee? The possibilities were endless. And there we sat, poured into a blocked funnel with the auto-tap still streaming to fill every available crevice. It reminded me of that old science lesson where the teacher filled a glass jar full of rocks and asked if the jar was full.

"Yes sir," we chanted dutifully, before he poured in some pebbles and asked again. And again we chanted,

so he poured in sand - and then water - until at last the jar was completely full. Now our highway was like that. Then I heard the sirens and in my rear view mirror saw the flashing light. A probing, strobing, ambulance was moving - if that be the word - with all the élan of a snapping turtle. I could imagine the cursing in the cab as there was simply no way to part the dreaded sea of cars. Stuck, and maybe too a life out of luck, all because some selfish

Viewpoint by W.W.

b*****s blocked the emergency lane. So yes, I am a strong advocate of an air ambulance element as was announced recently.

As most developed countries have found, it is an essential piece of kit as highways become increasingly clogged - even where emergency lanes are kept open and where non-essential service transgressors are heavily fined.

The ability is there since Bahrain is required to have a special air ambulance for the Formula One Grand Prix.

An argument could probably be made that the urban roads here are a far more dangerous place than

any race track! The often chaotic traffic flow means a public air ambulance is long overdue, but let's hope the interval between a good idea and its operation is a short one. However, it is not enough. We also need the "boys on bikes", a mosquito fleet of motorised paramedics with the minimum emergency kit on the back who can usually thread their way through stopped traffic to get to the scene of an accident. Like fast-food delivery boys, but with a higher purpose. There they can render emergency stabilisation procedures to accident victims while the ambulance, or air ambulance, is getting there. Their role is so often vital in making the difference between life and death. It is a cheap and highly effective ancillary service that can be effective immediately.

Revamp pledge

Campaign underway to promote national pride

● Bahrain Polytechnic in new bid to enhance image after violations probe

A CAMPAIGN is underway to encourage students to reconnect with their roots and build a better Bahrain.

Bahrain Polytechnic's Our Kingdom Our Future drive involves a series of newspaper and radio adverts that seek to inspire national pride.

"It basically sends the message of where we are heading as a university and how our students can serve Bahrain," said Bahrain Polytechnic acting director of marketing and communications Sana Al Jamea.

"It comes in line with Bahrain Polytechnic's aim to give tools to Bahrainis for using their roots and carry on building their country."

The newspaper adverts feature a map of Bahrain filled with icons that represent the various academic programmes offered by the polytechnic.

"Each icon represents a student and how they can build our country and make it move forward," said Ms Al Jamea.

"We used icons as people can relate and understand what they mean and how the ones in line with a specific programme are lit up in red with its designated tagline.

"The campaign is an extension of the brand, which was created to encourage youth to be proud of their roots and re-establish them and move forward to build their country through education.

"It follows research and focus groups, which revealed some young Bahrainis are proud of their roots but lost their way in keeping that identity."

The Polytechnic's logo also seeks to



■ The campaign logo



■ Ms Al Jamea

symbolise thought and knowledge.

"The logo if seen closely has a very unique pattern that at first sight you can not identify its origin," said Ms Al Jamea.

"The pattern was created by us, it's an overlay of three patterns that represent three eras of Bahrain: the Dilmun, Medieval and Islamic.

"We then zoomed in and applied the result as a unique pattern exclusive to Bahrain Polytechnic, carrying the message that youth are the combination of Bahrain's roots and are armed with knowledge to build the future."

The Polytechnic plans to hold an open day at its Isa Town campus on March 23, from 10am to 4pm, where people can speak to students and staff about its programmes.

"We want to re-educate the public on the image of technical education," said its deputy chief executive for academic affairs Dr Hassan Al Mulla.

"The image needs to change as the economy is based on more hands on people and not only thinkers."

BAHRAIN Polytechnic has made significant efforts to improve its operations following allegations of corruption.

Thirty financial and administrative irregularities were discovered by the National Audit Court and Education Ministry last year.

They were outlined in two separate reports that uncovered a failure to abide by the tender law, staff being recruited without relevant qualifications and a lack of commitment towards Finance Ministry regulations.

It led MPs to call for an investigation by the Public Prosecution.

But despite the violations, deputy chief executive for academic affairs Dr Hassan Al Mulla said the quality of the polytechnic's academic programmes had not been affected.

"This is proved as last year almost 3,000 applicants came forward to register for 300 to 400 places in the Bahrain Polytechnic," he said.

"This indicates reputation is driven by the academic achievement.

"We have made significant efforts to correct actions required for violations raised by the reports.

"We have addressed almost all of the points. Now it is important to look forward."

Leader

The polytechnic claims to be one of Bahrain's leading providers of education.

Dr Al Mulla said its academic programmes were unique regionally and aimed to produce graduates capable enough to fill skill gaps identified by the Labour Ministry, Tamkeen and Economic Development Board.

"The Bahrain Polytechnic programme focuses on creating work-ready graduates by following a problem-based and project-based approach to learning.

"So far, this has not been found in the region or even internationally.

"We have been participating in conferences locally and internationally to share our experience in addressing gaps in the market," said Dr Al Mulla.

Dr Al Mulla said one of the key strengths



■ Dr Al Mulla

By BASMA MOHAMMED

of the polytechnic was its curriculum advisory committee which involves faculty and local and international industry representatives reviewing and correcting any gaps found in its academic programmes.

Students also go through annual evaluative reports on their performance.

"They are given two evaluative reports upon their graduation along with their transcripts," said Dr Al Mulla.

The polytechnic has around 2,000 students and offers engineering, business, international logistics management, web media, information and communication technology degrees.

Its first batch of 90 students are due to graduate by the end of the year.

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