

Anecdotes from a Travel Dairy

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The Difference

September 22, 2002, Amsterdam – 0945

A lady comes asking *"I can not find my flight details on the TV screen showing other flight details and departure gate information"* to one of those numerous 'checking' personnels. *"Please check your ticket and check again on the TV screen"*, he says calmly in turn. The lady has obviously done that and say she just did that, but was not able to spot her flight on the ever changing information the TV screen but says that she was told that her flight would depart from gate E23. Then he says *"Then madam you look for the signs and then go to E23 and there you can look for the flight details in the TV screen"*. My flight NW0061 to New York is being announce and I depart quite amused by the conversation that happened in front of me.

In India - the 'checking' guy would have literally led her to the departure gate. *"This way madam, I can help you with the luggage etc..."*. But the point I could not fathom is what if that lady went to gate E23 and did not find details about her flight? Back to the square one. Did anyone say every things should have an end?!

Happens All the time Everywhere

September 22, 2002, NW0061 Amsterdam to New York – 1535

I am inside the gate waiting to board NW0061. Expecting an announcement asking people to board the aircraft and lo comes the announcement "Technical Snag", unknown delay, please cooperate! A couple of minutes before this I had seen a bag being carried by a boy which had the caption "IT happens only in Indya" - I laughed - it happens everywhere. Somehow I had a feeling that things might not go wrong in European countries - wrong. Murphy you are always right. After 40 minutes or so another announcement - "the leaking water problem has been fixed" – now boarding. Everyone settles into their seats and the 747-400 is taxied out. Suddenly someone notices water leak - oops it has not yet been fixed properly! - turn around - back to the airport gate. Four technicians and four helpers and after 2 hours the flight finally takes off. I have filled the I-94 form required to enter USA along with customs form. My immediate thought - will I get enough time to catch the connecting flight from New York to Detroit? I mean I have to collect my luggage and the recheck it into the domestic flight from New York to Detroit. Does a water leak take so much time to fix? Boeing is a Boeing everywhere - in India would they have taken more time to fix it - I will never know - do I really care?

Scare – Temporarily

September 23, 2002, NW068 New York to Detroit

Everyone is settled into their seats - traveling economy is not very comfortable though especially if you are built big. The announcement " door closed - this flight to Detroit". Suddenly one man starts jogging with his bag to the front of the aircraft - literally everyone in the aircraft freezes - after a couple of seconds he returns back — everyone sigh a sign of relief. As the man walks by - everyone is giggling and laughing - the man surely embarrassed. The man apparently wanted to go to Kansas and this was not announced - the flight was apparently going to Kansas after a brief halt at Detroit! Wow - things happen and there is a real scare when unexpected things happen.

Refresh Renergise

September 23, 2002, NW068 Detroit to Seattle

"Refresh Renergise" the video program on the NW flight said. That is interesting I thought - the video comes on with 3 ladies sitting comfortably - relaxing their limbs, delicately and video attractively - I have seen this video before in other NW flights - but I did not pay much attention – traveling back home I am more relaxed and less anxious - I feel something is not very proper. Well, I am in the economy class and the video shows the business class seating. Ladies can you please show me how one can do those delicate limb movements to relax in an economy class setup. Sir the video is for business class passengers I am told - then what is the point showing it to the cattle class passengers? No motives — please get yourself a business class ticket next time.

Last Segment

October 1, 2002, Amsterdam to Mumbai

Plane size is constant in the direction showing map inside the aircraft - say at a certain resolution the "plane" is covering whole of India! Pity! Well another thing, I did not know that Bombay (announcement), Calcutta, Madras existed since their names were changed to Mumbai, Kolkotta and Chennai a while ago — well, they still exist on NW flights.