

Drunken revelry on London Tube to protest booze ban

Thousands of Londoners organised an unauthorised 'drinks party' Saturday night to mark their protest against a new ban on alcohol in public transport, bringing the city's underground transport system to a virtual standstill.

Thousands of revellers, some dressed in tuxedos, some in ball gowns and some even naked, gathered for a booze-up on Tube trains after being invited through the social networking site Facebook to join the party before the new alcohol ban comes into effect Sunday.

The unusual revelry forced the authorities to shut down the key Circle Line, which serves some of the capital's most exclusive districts.

'There are problems on the Circle Line and it has been stopped,' a London Transport Police official said.

'It was crazy!!! People were packed into carriages like sardines - and seemed all too happy about it. There were loud chants of 'ole ole ole' and 'Boris is a W*****' (a pejorative term). At one point everyone in our carriage started singing 'Doe a Deer', said a passenger while describing his experience on one of the trains.

'I have never witnessed such anarchy. It built up as it approached midnight. The chants grew louder. And the trains stopped for minutes on ends between stations. At one point I think we were in between two stations for twenty minutes at least,' said David Mudkips, who works as a software engineer.

'As the train stopped at each station, people would get out, shout, and run into different carriages. Some people waited for the next train. They were all madhouses on rail tracks,' he said.

'People were smoking in the carriages as well. While the train was stalled, a man opened the door between the two carriages and took a leak. It was insane,' he added.

'It was one helluva experience. There were at least 10,000 people in the London underground today (Saturday). It was a protest unlike any other I have seen. It puts a whole new perspective on protests, and reasons to protest,' said Darren Stevenson, a 27-year-old business executive.

For Indian student Mayuri Singh, it was a crazy experience. She told IANS: 'Today I witnessed total anarchy, but there was no misbehaviour towards fellow passengers. We were all stuck together, but no one pinched my bottom, or passed lewd remarks. There was drunken singing and drunken misbehaviour - but it was directed towards generally making a fool of themselves, and cussing Boris Johnson (new mayor), and vandalising the tube.'

The police have arrested at least six people for disrupting the transport service.

Newly elected London Mayor Boris Johnson has introduced a total ban on alcohol in public transports in the city.

Anyone caught drinking or even carrying alcohol will be thrown out from trains and buses under this

new law that comes into effect from Sunday.

Substantiating the ban, Johnson had earlier said that the ban on alcohol on London's public transport would create better travelling environment for all passengers.

The move has been criticised by the railworkers union RMT, which thinks that the ban will be an extra burden on its overworked members.

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