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● Tribune has reported earlier that the Government have been tightening its grip on dispensing medicines, such as Lyrica, to curb its misuse.

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New details have recently unfolded in the case of the drug ring that was exposed last month in Muharraq Governorate involving a “renowned” doctor, several pharmacists and a military personnel.

The case is being deliberated by the First High Criminal Court, which decided to adjourn the trial of the suspects to February 23, 2019, to hear the testimonies of prosecution witnesses, while one suspect was referred to the military judiciary.

The suspects are facing the charges of dispensing large quantities of addictive prescription pills known as “Lyrica”, using fake prescriptions issued by the prime suspect, the doctor, and illegally selling it to addicts for higher prices that are sometimes more than four doubles of their original cost.

The ring was exposed when the Public Prosecution announced last month that the Military Police of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) in co-oper-

ation with the Anti-Narcotics Department in Interior Ministry arrested a military staff and two civilians while illegally selling the pills.

During the interrogation, one of the suspects told interrogators that he has been familiar with consuming the medicine claiming that it was prescribed to him after he was involved in a traffic accident back in 2010.

Explaining further, he stated that he had met some individuals who asked him to illegally sell them the medicine prescribed to him for prices ranging between BD10 to BD20.

The suspect confessed that he continued doing so; taking advantage of the prescriptions issued in his name and illegally selling it for years.

He also said that throughout this process of selling Lyrica to addicts, he had met the prime suspect, the doctor, few months ago.

The suspect said the doctor would prescribe large quantities to him in one go, as he, the doctor, worked in several hospitals and was cooperating with several pharmacies around the Kingdom to dispense the medicines to the suspect.

In his statements, the suspect mentioned that the relation had developed with the doctor, as the latter requested him to provide him with copies of identity cards so more prescriptions

New details on Lyrica peddling ring ‘come to the fore’ as trial progresses

Doctor, pharmacists and a military man suspected to be part of the ring



Lyrica is not dispensed without a precise prescription by a specialised consultant and an official stamp.

“Large quantities of narcotics and amounts of money collected from selling drugs were found in the arrestees’ possession.”

MR AL RAMADHAN

could be issued to sell larger quantities of Lyrica to addicts.

The suspect confessed that he once sold a box of Lyrica packets for BD3,000, using the same method.

Investigation revealed that some of the prescriptions were issued in 2019 to individuals who had left Bahrain in 2018.

The suspect also informed the interrogators that he would averagely collect 60 packets from the pharmacies advised by the doctor every two days, adding that he would sell one packet for prices ranging between BD50 and BD100, and that sometimes when the demand is high he would collect more than 100 packets at one go.

On January 20 this year, Muharraq Governorate Chief Prosecutor Ahmed Abdullah Al Ramadhan, was quoted in a press statement released by the Public Prosecution confirming the arrest of the suspects.

The Chief Prosecutor said that large quantities of narcotics and amounts of money collected from selling them were found in

the arrestees’ possession.

Back then, Mr Al Ramadhan stated that the prosecution launched its investigation into the incident, interrogated the arrestees, heard witnesses’ testimonies and reviewed a report prepared by the technical committee, which inspected the computers in a number of public and private hospitals, and analysed the entered data in them.

The Chief Prosecutor explained further in the statement saying that it was proven that the accused doctor issued fake prescriptions and reports that stated that the individuals mentioned on the prescriptions had undergone the necessary medical examination and are worthy of collecting the narcotics.

Mr Al Ramadhan also confirmed that other suspects, who were involved in the case, would purchase the narcotics from certain pharmacies, where the pharmacists are also complicated in their plot, and later sell the pills to drug addicts for higher prices. He added that the prosecution issued arrest warrants against other suspects who’re abroad.

Tribune has reported earlier that the Government have been tightening its grip on dispensing medicines, such as Lyrica, to curb its misuse.

This came after reports and footage were widely circulat-

ed online claiming that Lyrica is being peddled and misused among school students of both genders in Bahrain.

On August 1, 2019, the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA) announced that it had closed a pharmacy and suspended its manager for a year, after it was proven that the pharmacy sold Lyrica without prescription and for higher prices.

Additionally, a statement issued following the regular weekly Cabinet meeting last September mentioned that the Cabinet had approved a draft edict on the procedures for regulating the dispensing of medicines containing substances listed under the pharmaceutical group gabapentinoid to which drugs such as Lyrica belong.

The statement mentioned that the move comes out of the Cabinet’s keenness to place more procedures to control the dispensing of medicines and reduce their misuse.

Tribune yesterday contacted a number of the leading pharmacies in Bahrain to ask about the conditions of selling Lyrica to patients. The majority of the contacted pharmacies confirmed the unavailability of stocks of the medicine.

However, they all confirmed that it is sold for prices ranging from BD15 for a 75MG packet to BD28 for a 150MG packet.

Visitors from five countries face Bahrain entry ban

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Visitors from five countries have been banned from entering the Kingdom as the government takes up strict measures to prevent coronavirus outbreak in the country.

The authorities in Bahrain have decided to put in place three stringent steps to ensure that coronavirus is not spreading in the Kingdom, in case anyone gets diagnosed.

The steps include banning entry to all foreigners who have visited five countries including

Iran, Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea.

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Interior, has activated several procedures related to arrivals to the Kingdom of Bahrain in light of the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19),” the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday.

“The procedures include: Banning entry to all foreign visitors who have visited the Islamic Republic of Iran, the

Kingdom of Thailand, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Malaysia and the Republic of South Korea within 14 days of their date of arrival in the Kingdom.

“Bahraini citizens, GCC citizens and Bahraini residents who have visited Iran, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia or South Korea within 14 days of arriving in Bahrain will be subject to quarantine and enhanced testing procedures, recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).”

“The ministry advises citizens and residents to follow

“We are advising citizens and residents to follow WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas where Coronavirus has been detected.”

HEALTH MINISTRY

WHO guidelines and avoid all but essential travel to areas

where Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been detected,” the ministry stated.

The Ministry of Health stated that it is taking various measures to prevent an outbreak of the deadly coronavirus outbreak in Bahrain.

A number of measures have already been taken by the Ministry, the ministry said in a statement.

“The ministry is taking all precautionary measures for this purpose. The situation is being monitored closely. Co-ordination is ongoing with relevant authorities and the Bahrain In-

ternational Airport.”

The ministry urged the public to take precautionary measures after travel. It said that it is communicating directly with the World Health Organisation.

Bahrainis were assisted by the Bahraini Embassy in China to return to the Kingdom to escape the country amid the coronavirus scare.

In co-operation with the Ministry of Health, the Bahrain International Airport is conducting thorough checks to make sure patients infected with coronavirus does not enter Bahrain outside the airport.

Club receives dignitary



Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman, Senate of Pakistan along with his delegation of Senators visited Pakistan Club Bahrain, where Rehan Ahmed, Chairman Pakistan Club, board members and members of the Pakistani community accorded a warm welcome. The Senate delegation included Senator Abida Azeem, Senator Manzoor Ahmed, Senator Fida Muhammad, Senator Keshoo Bai, Senator Mirza Afridi, Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim, Senator Sajjad Hussain Tori, Senator Mohammed Balushi and Syed Abid Hassan, Advisor to the Chairman Senate. Afzaal Mahmood, Ambassador of Pakistan and Pakistan Club Board members welcomed the Pakistan Senate Delegation at the Club.