



جمعية حماية العمال الوافدين
Migrant Workers Protection Society
(MWPS)

MIGRANT VOICE

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY

NEWSLETTER | VOLUME 01 | EDITION 08 | AUGUST 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

**TO CREATE A COMMUNITY
WHERE EXPATRIATE
RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED
AND TO RAISE AWARENESS
OF THESE RIGHTS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES**

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FROM THE CHAIRPERSON...

As we navigated through the month of August, the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) once again remained steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrant workers in Bahrain. The challenges faced by our community are numerous, but so too is our resolve to address them.

In recent months, we have done our best to help improve the conditions for workers, thanks to the collective efforts of our dedicated team, volunteers, and supporters. However, there is still much work to be done. Many workers continue to face hardships, from inadequate living conditions to limited access to essential services. It is our duty to ensure that their voices are heard and their rights are upheld.

Our ongoing initiatives, primarily the Extend the Shade Campaign, are examples of how we are working to create a safer and more supportive environment for all workers.

As we move forward, let us continue to stand together in solidarity, advocating for the rights and well-being of every migrant worker in Bahrain. Your support and involvement are crucial in making a lasting impact.

With warm regards,

MONA ALMOAYYED

CHAIRPERSON

MIGRANT WORKERS PROTECTION SOCIETY

EXODUS OF SKILLED WORKERS FROM PAKISTAN TO THE GULF

INSIGHT

According to a recent article by Middle East Eye (MME), nearly one million Pakistanis have left for the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar in the past year, driven by the severe economic crisis at home. The political upheaval following Imran Khan's dismissal as prime minister and the subsequent economic reforms under Shebaz Sharif have led to soaring inflation and a dire financial situation. The economic instability has forced many Pakistanis to seek work abroad. Since April last year, 700,000 Pakistanis have moved to Saudi Arabia, 229,000 to the UAE, over 100,000 to Oman, and around 90,000 to Qatar. The surge in passport applications, from 24,000 to 40,000 daily, underscores the growing desperation.

'The skills gap is getting bigger and more acute, it's already affecting Pakistan's enterprise capacity'
Imtiaz Gul, Analyst, MME

contd on pg 03





SPOTLIGHT

MEET THE TEAM

Get to know the exceptional individuals behind the MWPS scenes in this segment.



#teammwps

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

KARTHIKEYAN ARUMUGAM

Karthikeyan, originally from India, has been a dedicated resident of Bahrain for over fifteen years. His commitment to social activism has significantly impacted the community. Since 2016, he has been an active member of the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS), focusing on quality, safety, and environmental concerns, especially worker health and safety.

Karthikeyan raises awareness about rights among expatriate communities, empowering individuals to resolve their workplace issues. He collaborates with donors and sponsors to provide essential support, such as dry ration packages and healthcare services.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Karthikeyan supported more than a thousand families with donor contributions to distribute essential food packages across Bahrain. His profound faith and commitment to assisting the voiceless and hopeless have driven his tireless efforts.

Currently, Karthikeyan serves on the MWPS board and leads the Labour and Social Welfare committee, continuing to make a lasting difference in many lives.

EDITORIAL

In the heart of Bahrain's bustling streets, Talabat drivers weave through traffic, delivering meals and essentials to our doorsteps. These drivers, many of whom are migrant workers, are the unsung heroes of our daily lives. Their dedication ensures that we receive our orders promptly, regardless of the season or weather conditions.

Despite facing long hours, heavy traffic, and the constant pressure to meet delivery deadlines, these drivers remain committed to their work. Their resilience and determination are truly commendable. However, the challenges they face are significant. From inadequate rest and recovery time to the financial burdens of transportation and accommodation, their struggles often go unnoticed.

Why did I choose to focus on Talabat drivers in this editorial? Simply because they epitomise a significant segment of the hardworking migrant population in the kingdom—those who serve us and help us live comfortably in this country. Let us take a moment to appreciate the dedication and resilience of these workers. Their hard work ensures our convenience and comfort, and they deserve our utmost respect and support.

As a community, we have a responsibility to show compassion and support for these hardworking individuals. Simple acts of patience, understanding, and generosity can make a meaningful difference in their lives. By advocating for better working conditions and raising awareness about their contributions, we can help create a more inclusive and respectful environment for all workers in Bahrain.

At the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS), we are dedicated to supporting all migrant workers. Our initiatives aim to provide them with the resources and support they need to thrive.

Happy reading!

RAJI UNNIKRISHNAN

EDITOR - MIGRANT VOICE

LMRA AND IOM UNITE FOR WORKER SUPPORT

The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), conducted a two-day awareness programme on August 8 and 9. Part of the "Working Together" initiative, the programme aimed to strengthen partnerships and empower leaders from 20 expatriate communities, promoting fair labour practices.

Participants toured the LMRA's Expat Protection Centre (EPC) in North Sehla, gaining insights into support services such as legal counselling, grievance handling, and aid for exploitation victims.

contd with pics on pg 04



OUTREACH

In August, MWPS handled several unique and challenging cases, demonstrating its commitment to supporting expatriates in distress. Among these were the repatriation of a Cameroonian national who had been stranded in jail for nearly four months due to overstaying his visit visa, a Sierra Leonean national who was also stranded in jail, and a Sri Lankan national facing similar circumstances. In each instance, MWPS intervened to facilitate their repatriation, ensuring they could return to their home countries safely.

Case 01

An Indian national urgently needed financial assistance due to serious medical issues. She was suffering from a severe illness that required immediate treatment, which forced her to stop working as a housemaid and her visa was cancelled. Unable to support herself and with no one to turn to for help, she found herself in a desperate situation.

The Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) intervened to assist with her emigration clearance and facilitated her return to her home country, ensuring she could receive the necessary medical care and support.

Case 02

A Sri Lankan national overstayed his visa because his passport was held by an agent who falsely promised to extend it. The Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) intervened to assist with the emigration clearance and helped him retrieve his passport. He has since travelled back to his home country.

Case 03

An individual arrived in Bahrain on a visit visa in 2022. Due to a false promise of extending his visa made by an agent, the Sri Lankan national overstayed for one year and nine months. Facing severe financial hardship and having no means to support himself, he requested assistance from his Embassy to return to his home country. The situation was addressed with the intervention of the Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) and the Embassy, who assisted with the emigration clearance process. He has since traveled back to his country.

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LMRA AND IOM UNITE FOR WORKER SUPPORT

The 995 National Human Trafficking Hotline, available 24/7 in multiple languages, was also highlighted as a vital resource for safeguarding workers' rights.

This initiative underscores LMRA's commitment to protecting and supporting expatriate workers in Bahrain.



EXODUS OF SKILLED WORKERS FROM PAKISTAN TO THE GULF

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Political analyst Imtiaz Gul highlights the severe impact of this exodus, noting that the skills gap is becoming more acute and affecting Pakistan's enterprise capacity. The country's GDP growth has plummeted from 6.1% to around 0.3%, and large-scale manufacturing has seen a significant decline. Major car manufacturers report an 80% drop in sales, and the textile sector has been crippled, leaving nearly seven million workers jobless.

While outgoing federal minister for labour and overseas Pakistanis, Sajid Hussain Turi, claims that skilled emigrants will boost foreign exchange remittances, Gul dismisses this notion as laughable. Economist Kaiser Bengali adds that when skilled emigrants leave, they often take their families, meaning remittances don't come through anymore. The skills shortage is already being felt, with companies struggling to operate due to the loss of essential technicians.

In the long term, without skilled labour, Pakistan cannot develop. The exodus of highly skilled workers not only affects GDP but also hampers the country's ability to attract foreign investment and build internal resilience. The current situation leaves many Pakistanis feeling conflicted and disillusioned, as they seek a better life abroad while grappling with the challenges at home.

BULLETIN

AGENTS ARRESTED FOR FAKE BAHRAIN VISA SCAM

On August 8, a Punjab-based agent and his accomplice were arrested for arranging a fake visa to Bahrain for a passenger named Rakesh. Upon arrival at Bahrain International Airport, Rakesh was denied entry and deported back to India after immigration officers discovered that his work visa was counterfeit.

The case was registered at the IGI Airport Police Station in Delhi, and an investigation was launched. Rakesh, who was also arrested under relevant sections of the BNS and Passports Act, revealed that he had decided to seek employment in an Arab country after hearing success stories from friends in his village in Punjab, India. He paid Rs 1.10 lakhs to an agent named Abhinandan Kumar, who promised to arrange his travel and visa to Bahrain.

Further investigation led to the arrest of Abhinandan, who disclosed the involvement of another accomplice, Bikramjeet. With inputs from local intelligence and surveillance, a team led by Inspector Sumit of IGI Airport successfully apprehended Bikramjeet from his hideout in Gurdaspur, Punjab.

During interrogation, Bikramjeet admitted to collaborating with Abhinandan to scam people by promising overseas jobs and providing fake visas. He revealed that he had visited Bahrain in 2018, where he met other agents involved in similar fraudulent activities. Bikramjeet received Rs 80,000 from Abhinandan to arrange tickets and a fake visa for Rakesh.

This incident highlights the ongoing issue of fraudulent job offers and the importance of verifying the authenticity of work permits and visas. The Migrant Workers Protection Society (MWPS) urges all expatriates to remain vigilant and seek assistance from trusted sources when pursuing employment opportunities abroad.

IN FOCUS

RATION DISTRIBUTION



Thirteen bags of dry rations were distributed to the Cameroonian and Indian communities, specifically targeting those in the low-salary category and individuals with health issues. This initiative aims to provide much-needed support to vulnerable members of these communities.

GOOD NEWS!

Come **SEPTEMBER**, Bahrain awaits a temporary improvement in weather with northwesterly winds reducing humidity levels. These winds will continue into next week, causing dust and increased sea wave heights, so the Meteorological Directorate advises caution, especially for sea-goers.



WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Check out our website for the link to our membership form.
Tel & WhatsApp: 00973 17827895 Email: mwpsbah2@gmail.com


www.mwpsbahrain.com