

CAPTAINS CORNER

More women need to be in “labour”



CAPTAIN MAHMOOD AL MAHMOOD

As Bahrain celebrated its triumphs and examined its future goals and challenges in the arena of female emancipation on Bahraini Women's Day, a call has gone out for more women to participate in labour unions.

The role of Bahraini women (as well as expat working women – Bahraini labour law allows expats also to contest in labour union elections) is important because of the increasing presence of women in the workforce. All over the world, women's participation in unions is seen as beneficial for several reasons. Unionised women have greater earnings – 30.9 percent more per week according to studies – and higher rates of health insurance coverage than non-unionised women. Of course, in Bahrain our priorities are different because we have universal health-care and our labour laws mandate equal pay and excellent maternity benefits.

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It is true that the central idea of women's participation in Bahrain's progress is that they should simultaneously discharge their important familial duties, unlike in many countries where working women have to compromise on their key roles as mother, wife and carer of the family. However, we still have many significant goals to meet – equal financial and training access for women to progress in the workplace, for example and the removal of the last vestiges of gender bias in the workplace. More importantly, a new generation of girls and young women need to see their older generation take on leadership roles in the workplace and to articulate their rights.

As an emergent democracy, Bahrain's leadership places a lot of emphasis on the vox populi – the voice of the people. Labour Unions are spaces where these can be exercised for the greater good and are training grounds for a rich political discourse. As we head into 2023, I hope we see and hear more women union leaders' voices in the area of labour discussions.

(Captain Mahmood Al Mahmood is the Editor-in-Chief of The Daily Tribune and the President of the Arab-African Unity Organisation for Relief, Human Rights and Counterterrorism)

The hidden cost of migration

Expatriates workers struggle as cost of living rises, says report

Staff reporter
TDT | Manama

Low-income migrant workers have become more vulnerable due to the increasing cost of living in Bahrain.

According to a 2022 survey by InterNations, Bahrain is the 15th best destination for expats living and working abroad. It, however, also adds that while the cost of living rises continuously, the wages of expats have remained stagnant.

Specifically, the prices of food products, electricity, and water bills rapidly increased in recent years, but not wages. Some parliament members had even issued ration cards to nationals as a relief.

This was to ensure that “people in Bahrain do not go to sleep hungry”, a migrant rights organisation website quotes a former lawmaker as saying.

The lawmaker adds: “Even average-income peo-



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A LAWMAKER

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and pensioners.”

However, such humanitarian initiatives seldom take into account migrant workers, despite them occupying 50% of the population.

When asked about the poverty among expatriates, an economist and social worker remarked: “Bahrain is not a country where poverty is widespread; it is one of the richest countries in the world and those found begging on the streets are not nationals.”

Our sources say the salaries of most expats have

not increased in about 17 years. “The cost of living has increased, but the salaries remained stagnant.” “Commodity prices are also on the rise.”

Private sector minimum wage!

Another issue is that Bahrain does not report a private-sector minimum wage.

“Since expatriates are arriving in great numbers to the Kingdom for work, employers always find healthy competition, giving them the freedom to hire at mini-

mum wages.

This should be read alongside the issues in the Kingdom regarding individuals not paying their EWA bills on time, with many claiming “they cannot afford it.”

A resident, who does not want to be named, told The Daily Tribune, “I am struggling to pay my bills every month; my salary does not allow me to live comfortably.”

“There are some months where I struggle to pay even for food.”

Reports also say there is a considerable increase in the number of people begging on the streets recently, with most identified as migrants.

Meanwhile, citizens claim that the money sent abroad drains Bahrain's economy.

The common consensus, however, is that migrant workers are suffering harsh conditions (working and living), as the cost-of-living increases, it becomes more difficult for them to live comfortably.

Women leaders to rise in health sector: study

● Currently, males dominate over 59% of leadership positions, says Human Resources for Health Study

Staff Reporter
TDT | Manama

Bahrain will see more women taking leadership positions in the health sector soon, according to a new study, which states that men now hold 59.4% of the leadership positions.

But men won't enjoy that for long! “Soon, women will gain more potential to hold leadership positions,” the Human Resources for Health Study says, citing an increasing trend in the participation and contribution of women to medicine in Bahrain.

The situation, however, is not the same in academic roles, where Bahraini women and men are equally



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represented.

Bahraini women physicians also tend to “slightly surpass” their men counterparts. The study points out that Bahraini women healthcare workers are a strong pillar of the healthcare sector, and the country boasts one of the highest proportions of women healthcare staff in the region.

“Even though there has been an increasing trend of women in medicine, they are still underrepresented in leadership positions in the medical field,” the study adds.

The study also highlights various

factors for this underrepresentation:

Balancing family vs. work duties and working part-time can limit women from achieving higher positions. The report adds that the government is boosting efforts to extend equal opportunities to women and decrease mistreatment or discrimination against women.

“Every year, women are getting closer to gaining more leadership positions in the medical field, and government officials in Bahrain are working hard to achieve equal opportunities for women,” the report added.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has pointed out that a country needs a balanced distribution of workforce in healthcare to accomplish sustainable development goals.

Several studies also claim that women physicians tend to provide more patient-focused communication, better care for diabetic patients, readmission to hospitals, and more evidence-based management.

Bahrain Beach Fest at City Beach

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Bahrain Beach Fest will be held on the 9th of December 2022, at the City Beach in Water Garden City from 9 am until 12 am.

The event, hosted by ‘It's a Breakthrough’, a full-service-integrated marketing agency, will have a range of water sports adventures, a multi-cuisine food festival, various enthralling performances, and more.

“It's more than a pleasure for It's a Breakthrough to bring the iconic Indian music band, Masala Coffee, and the leading actress Saniya Iyappan, for the very first time to Bahrain,” the event organisers said.

The tickets are priced at BD5, and available on Early Bird Discounts.

Homage paid to late Shura Council member

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Shura Council Chairman Ali bin Saleh Al Saleh yesterday paid homage to former Shura member late Muneera bin Hindi.

“The deceased set an honourable role model for human giving, sacrifice, sincerity and dedication in serving the nation and embodied multifaceted responsible and inspiring Bahraini women”, he added.

Al Saleh made the statement on the sidelines of the first Muneera bin Hindi Forum for People with Disabilities under the theme: “Achievements and Challenges”.



The British School in Bahrain hosted a festive night on school grounds last night. The event drew over 4000 people and included a variety of activities, including children's play areas. The main stage talent show was the most appealing aspect of the holiday celebration. Food, ornaments, arts, jewellery, and many other items were on sale at the venue. Talking to the Daily Tribune, BSB Executive Headmaster said, “It's a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the festive night with lots of love.” Furthermore, he stated that all sales donations go directly to royal humanitarian funds.