

#UnitedAgainstCovid19

Coming together

Expatriate communities step forward to help countrymen in need due to impact of COVID-19 outbreak

TDI | Manama

Well-meaning groups and individuals in Bahrain's ex-

patriate communities are stepping up to assist their countrymen who are struggling to make ends meet in light of the

current situation caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Hundreds of foreign na-

tionals are out of work and are unable to generate any income. The Bahrain government has

quickly responded and put forward many initiatives to assist the Kingdom's residents in this plight.

Many in the various expatriate communities have followed suit and are lending a helping hand in their own way.

Indian Community

Indian Community Relief Fund begins distribution of support kits

Indian Ladies Association members raise money for Migrant Workers Protection Society COVID-19 Relief Fund, while also launching various initiatives online for members

Bahrain Kerala Social Forum (BKSF) distributes food kits, initiative followed by several other Kerala expatriate associations



Some of the goods included in a support kit provided by the ICRF

4,000 antibacterial soaps and flyers with disease-exposure prevention instructions.

Meanwhile, Indian Ladies Association (ILA) members have contributed to a fund raising initiative by the ILA's Workers Welfare Subcommittee. The amount collected was transferred online to the Migrant Workers Protection Society COVID-19 Relief Fund and has been used by them to distribute dry rations to daily-wage expatriate workers.

Workers Welfare coordinators mentioned that this was done to avoid any gatherings at camp sites, as per the rules laid down by the government.

ILA has also been assisting in the national campaign to combat COVID-19 by launching various initiatives online for members. A campaign #WashourhandsILA was launched to spread awareness on the importance of hygiene. Over 25 ladies participated.

Various other ongoing ILA activities include "Ek Saath...Virtual Fun", a talent series where the members post two-minute videos of their skill or talent; and "Ek Saath...Virtual Yoga", online yoga sessions for members; while an online Zumba session "Ek Saath...Virtual Zumba" is also being planned.



BKS members and other officials with some of the donated goods



Members of the BKSF Helpline ready to give out food kits

Also in the Indian community, Bahrain Kerala Social Forum (BKSF), which is a popular WhatsApp self-help group among Keralites in the King-

dom, was one of the first associations to take an initiative with BKSF Helpline, through which they have collected and distributed food kits to the needy the

last two weeks.

The group is headed by Kerala Pravasi Commission member Subair Kannur and Bahrain Malayalee Business Forum general secretary Basheer Ambalayi. More than 100 food kits have been distributed among the community through volunteers.

Following this initiative, many other Kerala expatriate associations like Bahrain Keralaleeya Samajam (BKS), Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre, Overseas Indian Cultural Congress, Navakerala Kalavedi, Samsa Bahrain, Friends Association, Bahrain Prathibha, Samskruthi, Kollam Pravasi Association, and MM Team also started similar programmes, which has been a boon to the community during this stressful period.

BKS, which is known as the mother club for Kerala associations in Bahrain, have distributed hundreds of food kits.

Capital Governorate Social Affairs head Ahmed Al Rabea and Strategic Planning and Project Management head Yousif Lori visited BKS and praised the steps taken during this difficult period. The Capital Governorate also contributed 200 packets of dry ration, which included rice, oil, onions and other essentials to BKS in support of the distribution process.

Filipino Community

Philippine Ambassador Alfonso A. Ver, Embassy personnel and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Office spearhead "Bayanihan para kay Kabayan" project, donate food packs to around 1,500 Filipinos to date

The drive to provide relief to Philippine nationals affected by the measures to curb the coronavirus spread is being spearheaded by the Philippine Embassy through the launch of the project "Bayanihan para kay Kabayan". The word "Bayanihan" loosely translates to "working together"; it is a common value of Filipinos who always come together to help each other through difficult times.

Embassy personnel, led by Ambassador Alfonso A. Ver, and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration Office in Bahrain (OWWA-Bahrain) were able to assemble almost 1,000 packs for distribution.

The Embassy's beneficiaries were contacted for their individual schedules to receive the goods in observance of social distancing protocols, while OWWA-Bahrain delivered the packs to the accommodation of workers who sought assistance.

Members of the Filipino community, as well as other private



Philippine Ambassador Ver with some of the donors and their contributions at the Embassy premises



A group of Filipino ladies with their donations supplied through the Embassy

groups and individuals, answered the call and rallied behind the cause, donating food items through the Embassy for distribution to those in need, particularly those who are working under a no-work, no-pay scheme, those who have been asked to go on

unpaid leaves, and those who have totally lost employment during this difficult time.

Donations have included sacks of rice, canned goods, instant meals, fruits and vegetables, bottles of water, and much more. These have been collected at the

embassy premises in Zinj and distributed to Overseas Filipino Workers most in need of assistance.

Among the groups who have donated through the Embassy are Filipino Club Bahrain, Prince Hall Masons, Pinay Ikaw, Mohamed bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Cardiac Centre, Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. Bahrain, Bravo Manpower, Filipino Teachers of Multinational School, Travellers Tribe, Institute of Integrated Electrical Engineers Bahrain and PhilBahMoms, to name just a few.

As of yesterday, the Philippine Embassy, through the help of these donors, have already distributed packs to around 1,500 individuals.

Bangladesh community



BYC members with boxes of donations

Bangladesh Youth Club (BYC) members contribute essential food items to more than 100 Bangladeshis in need

In the Bangladeshi community, members of Bangladesh Youth Club (BYC) have taken an initiative to make a contribution of essential food items to their countrymen in need.

A team delivered the essentials to more than 100 people all over Bahrain. All donations were exclusively contributed by the members

of BYC.

The club has assured that the activity has been executed while abiding by strict guidelines enforced by the government to help control the virus' spread. Members were divided into several small groups of two people each. They applied the appropriate precautions when delivering the donations.

BYC president Al Amin Muhammed has requested that the Bangladeshi community to come forward and help the poor and needy. BYC is ready to extend a volunteering hand should anyone like to make a contribution and needs assistance.