

# Call to reserve seats for trade union members in parliament

Union leader raps directives banning trade union representatives from electoral battles

● The Labour and Social Development Ministry has directed the trade unions in Bahrain to comply with the laws and regulations which ban political work including electoral propaganda for any parliamentary or municipal candidate.

● The ministry has instructed trade unions to refrain from endorsing candidates or involving in any political activities related to the elections.

TDT | Manama  
Mohammed Zafran

Parliament seats must be reserved for trade union leaders and representatives, according to a prominent trade union leader.

General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) General Secretary Hasan Alhalwachi has said that the directive on restricting trade union repre-



Trade unions say reserving seats in parliament would bring more welfare to the labour sector.

sentatives from running for parliament seats goes against the interest of the labour sector.

According to him, trade union leaders can be a strong voice for the people as trade unions exist to support the cause of employees, which is the majority of the people.

He said that the law restricting trade union representatives from running for the parliament posts must be amended.

“Why should there not be a representative for the trade un-

ions in the parliament when we are taking care of the rights of a large part of the population?”

“By being in the parliament, we will be able to work to address the issues faced by the workers. As we enter a period of VAT and other new measures being introduced, it is important that workers’ issues are represented adequately.

“Recently, we had huge debates in the parliament about the pension law. This is a subject in which trade unions have great-

er expertise and could provide our inputs, but unfortunately we weren’t able to do.

“By representing the workers, trade unions are representing the people themselves. We have a responsibility to support the workers, businesses and the economy.”

Mr Alhalwachi said that seats should be reserved for trade unions at the parliament. “The candidates representing the trade unions can convey the views at the behest of labour community

at the parliament.

“At present, the labour sector is under represented at the parliament. Unions need bigger platform to work with the authorities on implementing measures that would bring welfare to the working class.

“As of now, labour unions have a very limited role and we would like to see a change happening.”

The union leader said that reserving seats in the parliament will definitely expand the horizons of trade unions.

“Moreover, we are seeking strong partnerships with Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Labour Ministries, other bodies and department.”

A few days ago, the Labour and Social Development Ministry called on trade unions in Bahrain to comply with the laws and regulations, which ban political work.

The ministry has instructed trade unions to refrain from endorsing candidates or involving in any political activities related to the elections.

“The Labour and Social Development Ministry calls on trade unions in Bahrain to comply with the laws and regulations which ban political work including electoral propaganda for any parliamentary or municipal candidate.

“It stresses that article (22), paragraph B of Decree-law 15/2002, regarding the Shura and Representatives Councils, bans trade unions from conducting or participating in any electoral campaign for any candidate.

“Moreover, Article 20, paragraph D of the Trade Unions Law issued in Decree-law 33/2002 and its amendments forbid trade unions from practicing political work,” the ministry had stated.

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MR ALHALWACHI

## Rights Institute helps stranded expat fly home

TDT | Manama  
Rajeevan Puravankara

An Indian expatriate who was stranded in the Kingdom allegedly after being trapped by his employer finally flew home, thanks to the timely intervention by the Bahrain National Institute for Human Rights (NIHR).

The institute took up the matter after NIHR chairwoman Maria Khouri held a meeting to understand the plight of stranded expatriates at the Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam during the first week of October.

Sources said Surendran Pillai was hired as a driver for a beauty parlour and he remained unpaid for the past six months.

It is alleged that the employer also filed a theft case against Mr Pillai to throw him into legal troubles. “The employer fled a complaint that he had stolen a mobile phone and cash from the company,” sources added.



Mr Pillai

Though Mr Pillai approached the Labour Ministry and the Indian Embassy after being helped by some social workers, it did not yield any result as the employer refused to respond to the summons notice issued to him.

After acknowledging the misery Mr Pillai was going through, the NIHR allowed him to stay at its shelter for a period of over two weeks. The institute also took efforts to freeze cases against him.

Free from legal tangles, Mr Pillai was issued an out pass by the Indian Embassy enabling him to travel to India.

Mr Pillai’s successful return to the home country has offered hope to many stranded expatriates in the Kingdom.

## Graduation ceremony



More than 500 guests, students and their parents took part in the first graduation ceremony held at Pakistan School. Pakistan Ambassador to Bahrain Afzaal Mahmood was the chief guest at the event. School Principal Attiq Ur Rehman welcomed the guests. In his inaugural address, the Chairman Board of Management Sami Ur Rehman elaborated on school’s achievements since establishment.

## Chance for young artists to promote Bahrain abroad

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The Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) has launched an art competition aimed at university students aged between 18 and 25.

The competition, based around the theme ‘a glimpse of Bahrain’, aims to create awareness about EDB’s mandate and role amongst Bah-

raini youth while at the same time introducing Bahrain to potential investors and high level foreign stakeholders through converting the best paintings into corporate gifts.

With three top cash prizes worth BD1,000, BD500, and BD250, the competition will be open for submissions until November 29, 2018.

The winning paintings

**1,000**

Bahraini dinar will be awarded to the winner of the art competition.

will be presented as gifts to international guests and stakeholders, allowing Bahraini youth the opportunity to contribute to the EDB’s ongoing mission of attracting foreign investment.

The winning submissions will be featured on Bahrain EDB website under a gallery dedicated to this initiative titled ‘meet the contestants’. An entry form must be

filled out by each entrant and submitted physically, along with the artwork, to the EDB office. The entries must also be accompanied by copies of university ID’s and CPRs.

Once submitted, all entries will become the property of the EDB.

For more information and terms and conditions visit <http://www.bahrainedb.com/edb-art-competition>.