

No foreign hires without 21-day wait

Citizens given priority in private-sector recruitment

Mohammed Al Rifai, MP

Employers must advertise vacancies locally for seven days before applying for work permits

505,998 expatriates employed in private sector; thousands hold expired permits

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Private-sector employers must advertise vacancies locally for seven days and allow a 21-day window for Bahraini applicants before seeking approval to hire expatriate workers, the ministry has said.

In a written reply to MP Mohammed Al Rifai, the ministry stressed that the measure is designed to give



citizens priority access to private-sector jobs.

It said 505,998 expatriates are currently employed in the private sector on valid work permits. However, as of October 2025, 11,437 expatriates in the commercial workforce and 5,748 domestic workers were holding expired permits and had not left Bahrain.

Trade and vehicle repair accounted for the largest share

of foreign workers at 124,503, followed closely by construction with 118,666. Accommodation and food services employed 63,881 expatriates, while manufacturing accounted for 54,022. Administrative and support services stood at 40,104, and professional, scientific and technical activities at 26,441, the ministry said.

It added that 152,106 expatri-

ates in the commercial sector have remained with the same employer for more than five years, with overall service records tracked through contributions to the Social Insurance Organisation.

On the recruitment of Bahrainis, the ministry said suitable vacancies must be posted on the National Employment Platform to enable citizens to apply. It added that it works with training bodies to align qualifications with labour market demands and engages employers to encourage the hiring of Bahraini jobseekers.

The ministry said it could not provide the requested wage-band figures for expatriates and Bahrainis in the private sector, or detailed breakdowns of Bahrainis employed in the sector, as the data are held by other government entities. It noted that salaries often change after hiring and are recorded with the relevant authority rather than the ministry.

Five years, BD2,000 fine for traffickers

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Two Asian men have been sentenced to five years in prison each after being convicted of human trafficking and exploiting victims in unlawful activities.

The First High Criminal Court also fined each defendant BD2,000 and ordered them to cover the costs of returning the victims to their home countries. In one of the cases, the defendant was further ordered to be permanently deported from the Kingdom of Bahrain after serving his sentence.

The cases came to light following reports received by the



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Anti-Human Trafficking Unit at the General Directorate of Criminal Investigation.

Investigations revealed that

the defendants had lured the victims to Bahrain with false promises of employment. Upon arrival, their passports were

confiscated and their freedom restricted inside an apartment. Some victims were assaulted and coerced into illegal activities.

The Public Prosecution im-

mediately launched investi-

gations, recorded statements

from the victims and arranged

for their placement in a shelter

operated by the National Com-

mittee to Combat Human Traf-

ficking. The defendants were

questioned and remanded in

custody while police completed

further inquiries.

After sufficient evidence was

gathered, the Public Prosecu-

tion referred the cases to trial,

where the court issued its ver-

Postal X-ray scan exposes 3kg drug shipment

Mohammed Darwish
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Two men have been charged with importing and possessing drugs for sale after a suspicious parcel was intercepted during inspection at the postal section. The High Criminal Court has scheduled sentencing for 17 March and ordered that both remain in custody.

Prosecutors said the case dates back to 2025, when a customs officer scanning mail with an X-ray machine noticed a dense and unusual image inside a parcel.

The first defendant later arrived to collect the package, accompanied by the second man. According to prosecutors, he told officers he was picking it up on behalf of the person whose name was on the parcel and signed the collection form.

When officers opened the parcel, they found 21 packets of food and household items. Hidden inside them was about three kilogrammes of what investigators believe to be narcotic herbal substances, concealed in a way designed to avoid detection. The case file states that the first defendant broke down in tears and apologised when the drugs were discovered.

Both men were arrested and taken for questioning. Prosecutors said the first defendant admitted he had acted on instructions from an Asian national in his home country and



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had been promised BD1,500 to collect the parcel.

Investigators also said he used another person's name, address and identity details to receive the package after misleading him into believing the information was needed to collect personal items.

The man whose details were used later told police he had shared his ID copy and personal information so the defendant could collect what he thought were belongings sent by relatives, and that he had no knowledge of the drugs.

Further investigations linked the shipment to an organised group suspected of trafficking drugs for profit, with other individuals still unidentified. Authorities said the victim's identity had been used without his knowledge or consent.

During questioning by the Public Prosecution, the first defendant admitted collecting and signing for the parcel as part of an agreement with an unknown person and acknowledged involvement in promoting drugs in the country, according to the case file.

The court is expected to deliver its verdict on 17 March.

RMS participates in World Health Expo



The Royal Medical Services (RMS) participated in World Health Expo (WHE), held in the United Arab Emirates from 9 to 12 February. Brigadier Dr. Shaikh Fahad bin Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, RMS Commander, visited the RMS's pavilion, affirming continued support for the advancement and modernisation of the healthcare sector. The pavilion presented a comprehensive range of advanced medical and therapeutic services delivered by Royal Medical Services hospitals and centres, highlighting state-of-the-art infrastructure, cutting-edge technologies and highly qualified national professionals.