

Bahrain relief pours to flood-hit Kerala

TDT|Manama
OP Sreesadan

Expatriates in the Kingdom are extending their help to the Indian state of Kerala which is reeling under the worst flood devastation in its history.

More than 350 people have been killed as a result of the flood, with 85,000 people displaced and 14 districts placed on high alert.

“Kerala is experiencing an unprecedented situation due to heavy and continuous downpour and resultant floods and natural calamity. The state mechanism is effectively engaging in the damage control. We need enormous help and liberal support from the NRI community across the globe,” Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said yesterday.

Thousands of people have been rendered homeless and many buildings have been destroyed in the worst floods in nearly a century.

The Bahrain Keraleeya Samajam (BKS), one of the oldest and largest leading socio-cultural organisations on the island, is gearing up to extend support to the Kerala government for their



Relief materials collected by the KMCC.



Bahrain-based Padav, a family collective, with the relief materials they collected.

activities to save people from this unprecedented calamity.

The BKS has postponed their Onam celebrations, which were slated to start from August 21.

“We are getting a lot of response from the expatriates here requesting help for their relatives in Kerala who are stranded in different locations in due to severe floods,” said BKS Acting-President Dileesh Kumar V S and

General Secretary M P Raghu.

“The BKS 24-hour helpline received 25 calls on Thursday and our volunteers in Kerala have distributed aid to the flood-hit areas in the districts of Wayanad, Pathanamthitta, Kollam and Kottayam,” they said.

Bahraini yoga expert Fatima Al Mansoori has visited the flood hit areas and the refugee camps in Kerala.

“They appreciated that someone is there to listen, hold their hand and feel their suffering. Some of them even hugged me,” Fatima told Tribune.

“Bahrain-based Padav, a family collective, has collected clothes for the people who are affected by floods and this will be sent to Kerala by cargo today,” said a representative Badaruddhin.

Almost all expatriate socio-cultural organisations have cancelled their Onam and Eid celebrations in support of Kerala flood victims.

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BKS OFFICIALS

The board of directors of SNCS informed that they have cancelled Onam and Chathayam celebrations in view of the catastrophe back home.

Leading money transfer, foreign exchange and payment solutions brands, UAE Exchange and Unimoni, have waived service fee on remittances to Kerala Chief Minister’s Distress Relief Fund

in the wake of the catastrophic floods in Kerala.

The initiative, which enables the global Indian diaspora to contribute to the relief efforts, follows a personal contribution of two crore rupees made by the Group Chairman and noted UAE-based businessman and philanthropist, Dr BR Shetty, to help those affected by the floods.

In these difficult times, as part of Bahrain Financing Company’s (BFC) corporate social responsibility, rupees 35 lakh will be donated to the Kerala Chief Minister’s Distress Relief Fund to support the state and people of Kerala.

National carrier Air India and its low-cost arm Air India Express, said their flights scheduled to depart from the Kochi airport, which has been shut down till August 26 due to floods, will operate from Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode.

“Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre (KMCC) Bahrain has shown its strong solidarity with those affected with heavy floods by collecting around 500 kg dress in 31 cartons, which will be sent today,” said KMCC Bahrain President S V Jaleel.

Indian Youth Cultural Congress - Bahrain (IYCC) is collecting relief materials including bedsheets, blankets and sanitary napkins at collecting points in Riffa, Sitra, Isa Town, Muharraq, Hidd, Arad, Salmabad, Tubli, Um Al Hassam, Budaiya, Saar and Hamad Town. Bahrain Malayali Business Forum and Youth Wing also distributed food in the relief camps in Malappuram.

Bahrain’s national carrier Gulf Air said its flights to and from Cochin have been cancelled due to the closure of Cochin International Airport where operations are temporarily suspended until further notice.



Fatima Al Mansoori at a relief camp in Kerala.

Fun day for diff-abled students aboard HMS Ledbury

TDT|Manama
Harpreet Kaur

Eleven differently abled students from Bahrain-based rehabilitation centres were invited by non-profit initiative, Bahrain for All (BHR4All) to spend a fun day onboard HMS Ledbury alongside the UK Naval Support Facility (UKNSF) in Mina Salman Port.

The visit gave the opportunity to the students and their helpers to get real hands-on experience where activities like manning the ship’s cannon and getting fully kitted out in diving equipment along with the working of firefighting equipment were taught.

Furthermore, they were shown the nerve centre of the ship, the operations room, and experienced naval communications by using the ship’s internal radios. The day finished off with a well-deserved lunch ashore the UK Naval Support Facility (UK NSF) at Mina Salman.

“Days like this are extremely impor-

tant. Number one, these young adults are part of our society and they have every right to see what goes on out there and it’s vitally important for them to feel part of the community,” founder of BHR4All, Nivedita Dhadphale told Tribune.

“We’re delighted that they are being treated exactly the same as everyone else, just like they would on a school outing to learn something new. Activities on this ship kept all the students engaged and curious as well as giving them a chance to interact with people from different walks of life.

“We have a mix of Down syndrome, autistic, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and others in these students, all of who were made to feel part of the team and because they enjoyed themselves so much, they will remember the experience. It’s been just fantastic. We’re deeply grateful to all involved.

“The children were overjoyed with the visit and even asked us to book a bus again to take them there. They were



A British naval officer with students aboard HMS Ledbury.

all very engaged and the activities were interactive as in the crew allowed them to actually do things, which made it more entertaining and also practical in terms of remembering the experience.

“Moreover between July and August, we arranged a medical check-up at AMH (American Mission Hospital), we conducted the Health and Wellness Programme and now the ship visit. Also, Bahrain for all team is currently finalizing a project between Hotel Concierge Group and Ceram Dental where the details will be revealed soon.

“We hope to plan more visit for special abilities and other students in the future by working closely with the UKMCC (United Kingdom Maritime Component Command) who have been extremely co-operative and reached out to us.

“A few months ago, we a team from



A student being briefed on various equipment and facilities.



A student enjoys handling an equipment.



HMS Ledbury is the oldest of the eight Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessels, which was commissioned in the year 1981.

the UKMCC visited Hidd rehabilitation centre for a celebration at the end of the term, thus we will continue working with them as much as we can to provide exposure to our kids.

“We are actively involved in giving special children and young adults exposure to many different things. They have every right to be treated equally in society by all and they benefit from interacting with people from all walks of life and seeing and doing different things.

“A perfect example is the summer camp, where in just 12 sessions the kids had improved, mobility, lost weight; for those who needed to, learned good eating habits and improved coordination and balance. Over the weeks their confidence improved which meant that they were all ready to try out new tasks and exercises.

“I think it is important for them to have the opportunity to gain new experiences throughout their lives. People with different abilities are vulnerable members of society and it is up to all of us to together ensure that they have a good quality of life and most importantly see, learn and experience as much as possible,” Nivedita added.

Lieutenant Commander Claire Thompson, the Commanding Officer of HMS Ledbury, said this was a great opportunity for the sailors to interact with the students. “HMS Ledbury has been out here for a number of years; although my crew has just arrived. We spend most of our time at sea as part of the Royal Navy’s enduring presence in the Arabian Gulf. For the sailors alongside, this is a really good way of showing the local community what we do.”

“We’ve worked with Bahrain4All in the past, but we wanted to take things just that one step further. It wasn’t just about raising money, which we have done previously, but more about involving people and giving them a nice day out.

Mick Parkinson, a RAF airman based ashore, who helped organise the visit, said the unit will continue to support many local charity initiatives.