

Attending to the expat workforce



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One of the greatest development stories of the 20th century was that of the GCC region. After the discovery of oil, the GCC invested heavily in infrastructural development, building the template of the modern State with the requirements for health, education and food security. This necessitated the building of ports, roads, schools, hospitals and also the delivering of knowledge as human capital was enhanced.

In all this, we took the support of expatriates from around the world who had experience in these areas. I recall one of the Indian ambassadors telling me that pioneering men and women from his state of Kerala had long underpinned the health and education support system of the MENA region as they travelled to the GCC and Africa as doctors, nurses and teachers in large numbers.

Fast forward to 2020 and we have many expats working shoulder to shoulder with us in our Kingdom. Naturally, with the passage of time, our people too have scaled heights of knowledge and taken their rightful place in the workforce. Bahrainisation is a priority for our leaders and every effort is made to empower the Bahraini job-seeker with training and career opportunities.

However, this does not mean that the rights of expat workers are ignored. I am very happy to note that the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) is planning to study how the pandemic and its fallout have affected the expat community. The findings of the study will undoubtedly shed light on the problems expat workers face at every level and help our government to implement the extremely fair labour rules that Bahrain is known for. Not just the GFBTU for expat workers – I say, even the BCCI must survey expat business owners so that a clear picture emerges of what we need to do.

Our leaders recognise the importance of ensuring a level playing field for all workers regardless of nationality because diversity brings different ideas to the workplace and enriches communities. Moreover, Bahrain has a proud tradition of respecting human rights and in these difficult times, this is critical. The stories of expat workers having their safety net pulled from under their feet are increasingly common. Many are made to sign away their unpaid dues in return for the chance to go back home and others are forced to live in basic conditions because employers no longer respect their responsibilities towards them.

When times were good, our expat brethren helped us to lay the foundation for our future. Now that times are challenging, let us join hands and build yet another future with them – one that is created from hope and good faith.

(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)

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Visit visas extended free of cost

NPRA extends the validity of visit visas until 21 January 2021

- The extension will come automatically
- Not any application required
- The decision to help correct residency status

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It is good tidings for visit visa holders in the Kingdom.

Bahraini authorities are extending the validity of such visas until 21 January 2021 free of cost.

Holders of such visas here are not required to pay any money for the extension which would happen automatically, said the Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs in a statement.



Picture courtesy of AlAyam

Visit visa holders are also not required to submit any renewal applications through Bahrain's eVisa websites or any other ways.

The move is as per a decision of the Coordination Committee

chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Prime Minister.

The authority explained that the latest decision aims at allow-

ing people to correct the status of their residency permits, or to facilitate their departure when flight operations return to normality.

The decision takes into account the current extensional circumstance due to the deadly outbreak, which has either restricted or suspended flight operations in countries around the world.

NPRA clarified that it granted several facilities to visitors and residents who have been in the Kingdom of Bahrain since the start of the pandemic.

The authority said it extended residency permits as well as visa validity for foreigners stranded in the Kingdom.

The authority has also exempted them from paying administrative fees they incurred as a result of the situation from a humanitarian standpoint.

Three in the dock for stealing bank cards, money

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Police arrested three men for stealing ATM cards and then withdrawing money from it, with the help of their accomplices abroad.

The Director-General of the General Administration of Anti-Corruption and Electronic Security said the suspects aged between 29 and 36 years are all Arab nationals. Police learned about the fraud after one of the companies operating in the field of credit cards filed a case accusing fraudulent operations on cards.

The company told police that they detected suspicious activities on a card from outside the Kingdom.

Further investigation led to identifying and arresting the two suspects,

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who confessed to their crimes.

Officials are currently coordinating the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) to arrest the fourth suspect who is outside the Kingdom.

108 missions, 10,218 evacuees

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The General Directorate for Ports Security announced carrying out 108 missions to evacuate 10,218 citizens and residents from abroad, since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The directorate also carried out 188 missions to repatriate 19,757 residents in Bahrain to their respective countries, said Administrative Affairs Liaison Officer First Lieutenant Rashid Hamad Al-Dosary.

He was speaking during "Al Amn", a weekly programme broadcast on Thursdays on Radio Bahrain.

"The authority conducted COVID-19 tests for 91,029 passengers arrived in Bahrain", he said adding, they are also working to raise

the number of airport passengers from 1000 to 2000 daily.

A designated area is there for medical examination at Airport's reception hall to collect information on arriving passengers and to hold tests, he added.

Regarding the resumption of traffic on the King Fahd Causeway, Al-Dosary said they took exceptional measures to facilitate the movement of passengers in line with the required health protocols, adding that a comprehensive study is underway to restore cruise ships movement at seaports.

Al-Dosari urged citizens and residents planning to travel abroad via Bahrain International Airport to ensure first the procedures and conditions enforced at their destinations.

One more COVID-19 death

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Bahrain's health Ministry yesterday announced one more COVID-19 related death raising the total toll here in the Kingdom to 293.

A 76-year-old Bahrain man is the Kingdom's latest casualty.

There are currently 79 coronavirus infected patients receiving treatment in the Kingdom, of which 46 are critically ill.

The ministry also reported new 420 recoveries yesterday, taking the total number of people cured of their infections in the Kingdom to 73,841.

Health Ministry also conducted 8,143 tests yesterday to detect 246 new cases.

Amongst the newly detected cases in the Kingdom, 60 are expatriate workers, 183 are contacts of active cases, and three travel related.

The new tests also raised the total numbers of tests carried in the Kingdom, since its first case in February to 1,607,692.

Dawoodi Bohras Mark World Food Day

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Thousands of Dawoodi Bohras from all parts of the world have come out on World Food Day to engage in various activities to fight for a Zero Hunger World and honour our Food Heroes, amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The Dawoodi Bohras of Bahrain mobilised efforts and provided rations for a Labour Camp in Sanad. The community also committed 300 plus dry ration packets partnering with the Capital Governorate as a part of the fight against Covid-19.

Additionally, a refrigerator was kept near Salmaniya Garden in Manama as part of zero food waste initiative where excess food is kept for the needy.

Along with that, Kingdom Pride Centre in Selha, participated in



Officials during the activities part of World Food Day

the Nasayem Al Bahrain, a local environmental initiative by Zeba and family to distribute 1 million local fruit and vegetable seeds.

The free seeds aim to initiate people's interest in growing plants in their homes.

The activities were under

the banner of Project Rise, which is the global philanthropic arm of the Dawoodi Bohra community.