

Expatriate flies home after 15-year 'disappearance'

Chandran Kochukunjan has not been in contact with his family members back home for a very long period

Staff Reporter

TDI | Manama

A 'missing dad' who was later found in Muharraq by a group of social workers in co-operation with the Indian Embassy following a thorough search two months ago yesterday flew home.

The 'missing dad' - Chandran Kochukunjan - earlier expressed his willingness to reunite with his family members back in his home country, as told to social workers. It is still unclear as to why he maintained a distance from his family members for such a long period.

The search by social workers began after The Daily Tribune reported a plea from a 22-year-old Indian woman, seeking support to find out her father, who came to the Kingdom fifteen years ago and never returned home.

Anju Chandran, who hails



Mr Chandran with Mr Thirunilath at Bahrain International Airport yesterday

from Thiruvananthapuram, the capital district of the South Indian state of Kerala, said her dad left the family when she was

six years old.

She even posted her plea on social media platforms, seeking help from the community mem-

bers to find out her father.

"Long fifteen years have passed without having any information on my dad. The family has been in great struggle after 'he went missing in the Kingdom of Bahrain'."

Earlier, speaking to The Daily Tribune from Thiruvananthapuram, Anju's mother Rani, said there were no disputes between husband and wife or with any other family members.

"We have no idea as to why he left the family. The children have grown up and they need his support," she said.

Anju is a final year nursing graduation student. She also has a brother.

Sudhir Thirunilath of World NRI Council thanked Devji Group for providing air tickets to Mr Chandran. The out pass was issued by the Indian Embassy and the requirements were facilitated by the World NRI Council.

Bahraini media 'credibility and professionalism' hailed



Speaker Zainal with Dr Al Nuaimi

TDI | Manama

Council of Representatives Speaker Fawzia bint Abdullah Zainal has commended the enlightening role of the Bahraini media in highlighting the Kingdom's distinguished achievements in all areas at home and abroad.

This role stems from the credibility and professionalism in the media and its keenness to achieve the public interest in accordance with the modern visions of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, she said as she received Information Minister Dr. Ramzan bin Abdullah Al Nuaimi.

The meeting covered ways to bolster cooperation between the Council of Representatives and the Ministry of Information.

Zainal stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between the Council and the ministry.

The Speaker praised the close cooperation between the Council and the government led by HRH Prince Salman bin

Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister.

She highlighted the ministry's efforts in supporting the national press and the media in general, noting the development and progress.

The Speaker commended the official media institutions and its programs that have contributed to strengthening the values and principles of loyalty and patriotism and the sense of belonging.

Al Nuaimi stressed the ministry's keenness on strengthening cooperation with the Council and fulfilling the aspirations of the Bahraini citizens.

The minister noted the significance of joint work with the parliament to promote freedom of opinion and expression in accordance with national values and professional responsibility.

He also stressed the ministry's commitment to supporting press and media institutions and to enhancing and promoting the media landscape.

Comprehensive update for checking academic qualifications announced

● Canceling mandatory equivalency of certificates issued outside Kingdom

TDI | Manama

Details of the comprehensive update for auditing university degrees and educational qualifications, which was approved by the Cabinet, have been announced.

This came during yesterday's press conference attended by Dr Mohammed Mubarak bin Ahmed, Chairperson of the Council for Regulating the Practice of Engineering Professions, Eng. Maryam Ahmed Jama'an, Director of the Employment Department at the Civil Service Bureau, Ali Al Hammadi, and Dr Zubaidah Al Sheikh from the National Health Regulatory Authority (NHRA).

Dr Mohammed said that this comprehensive update of the audit of university degrees and educational qualifications would contribute to facilitat-



Dr Mohammed, Eng. Jama'an, Al Hammadi and Dr Al Sheikh at the press conference

ing the process of employing citizens, taking into account the necessary audit of academic qualifications related mainly to specialised professions in fields like medicine, engineering.

He added that in order to achieve these ambitious goals, a comprehensive update has been made on the audit mechanism for university degrees and academic qualifications issued from inside and outside the Kingdom of Bahrain, where local universities will be authorised to audit certificates, and link local university systems with the systems of the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council.

And, then, the General Secretariat of the Higher Education Council audits the data of educational qualifications.

With regard to certificates issued from outside the Kingdom, the Director General of Schools Affairs explained that the mandatory certificate equivalency has been cancelled, and it is enough to verify the validity of the certificate through companies specialised in checking the validity of qualifications recommended by the Ministry of Education.

Regarding master's and doctoral qualifications, Dr Mohammed indicated that the comprehensive update allows for the

possibility of verifying the validity of the certificates by the employer or private sector institutions through the specialised companies recommended by the Ministry of Education. The affidavits for depositing scientific theses in the national public libraries of the Ministry of Education will continue to be granted according to the specified conditions.

Within the same context, the Schools Affairs Director General indicated that in order to speed up recruitment procedures in the private sector, the companies can optionally verify the validity of the educational qualifications.

BRCS provides \$50,000 relief aid to Somalia

TDI | Manama

The Bahrain Red Crescent Society (BRCS) provided \$50,000 in relief assistance to the Somali people to help them overcome the drought crisis that afflicted their country, and the resulting humanitarian repercussions represented in the high

incidence of hunger and disease, especially among children and women, to very large levels.

The Board of Directors of the BRCS approved this donation, which comes within the framework of the Kingdom of Bahrain's relief contributions to the needy and afflicted and helping them to overcome the difficult

times they are going through.

This donation comes as a response from the BRCS to the urgent humanitarian appeal launched by the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent with the aim of providing relief to Somalis from the drought disaster that struck their country, extending a help-

ing hand to them, and helping them provide the basics necessary for their survival.

On Sunday, the BRCS announced a donation of a similar amount to Sudan as relief assistance to the people affected by the floods that swept large areas of the country and left them without shelter.

COURT STORY

Salary cheat's jail term is reduced on appeal

TDI | Manama

A former employee of a private institution who was convicted of forgery has had his jail term reduced on appeal.

The defendant was earlier sentenced to seven years in prison, but will now serve only three years behind bars.

He was arrested for forging his salary in order to receive a higher retirement wage. He has been held guilty of serious charges of forgery and fraud.

According to court files, the defendant increased his salary on three occasions as he signed a contract entitling him to receive BD1,950 monthly.

Initially, he raised it to BD2,100 because his employ-

ers trusted him with access to the General Organisation for Social Insurance's portal. He did it secretly and after one year he made the same move.

His wage reached BD2,774, but he was sacked later. However, the access was still with him, and he increased his salary to BD3,300 before applying for retirement.

The General Organisation for Social Insurance contacted the institution about the issue. It was discovered that the defendant committed various wrongdoings in order to receive a better retirement package.

As a result, he was arrested and put on trial before the High Criminal Court.

Passport counterfeiter loses plea

TDI | Manama

The appeal of a Bahraini man accused of selling a fake passport to another man after misleading him about his ties that could have given him Bahraini citizenship was denied by the High Appeals Court.

According to court files, the 24-year-old defendant had offered his services to several Bahrainis and foreigners, stating that he could get them Bah-

raini passports in exchange for cash. He actually provided them fake passports, though.

Astonishingly, a 59-year-old Arab man accepted to pay BD300,000 to the defendant for his services. The defendant was arrested while he was about to hand the Arab man the fake passport.

He told prosecutors that he had a stolen original passport which he sent to Turkey, where the fake passports were made by counterfeiters.