

Social workers help expatriate 'tortured by employer' fly home

Employer returns victim's passport after being warned of legal consequences

TDT | Manama

A group of social workers successfully rescued an expatriate worker, who was allegedly held captive and subjected to forced labour by his employer.

The victim, Nisanth, hails from Kollam District in the Indian state of Kerala. He said he was recruited by an agent to work with a private firm in the Kingdom for a monthly salary of BD120.

"Upon arrival in the Kingdom, I was offered a different job as a worker in a restaurant. I took it up as my financial circumstances back home were not great."

Nisanth said his ordeal began on the very first day he joined the restaurant. "The employer began harassing me from the first day of work.

"I would work non-stop, day and night, sometimes fifteen hours in one stretch as the hotel had only two staff."

The situation became worse as the employer refused to pay him wages. "I was not given wages and my health began deteriorating. I lost weight after working non-stop for longer hours.

"I would begin my work at 11



Mr Subair hands over air ticket to Mr Nisanth.



Nisanth's swollen under feet after being allegedly made to work for days and nights without rest.

am and continued until 3 am or 4 am. My under feet was swollen and still my employer did not show any mercy," Nisanth said.

Respite only came after Nisanth managed to speak to social workers including K T Salim and Anwar Sooranad, who instantly rushed to help him along with some members of the media. Pravasi Commission Member Subair Kannur also offered help to the victim.

Though the employer was initially reluctant to release

Nisanth's passport, he yielded after being warned by social workers of legal consequences.

Nisanth said it was nothing but a rebirth for him. "I thought of committing suicide many a time but did not dare to do after thinking of my mother, wife and other family members."

Nisanth flew home yesterday. He was also handed over a 'Gulf Kit' by a group of social workers representing the organisation 'Hope' apart from the air ticket.

Shura endorses Reserve Force Decree-Law

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Members of Shura Council, the second branch of Bahrain's Legislative Authority, yesterday voted for a decree-law that stipulates the formation of a reserve force of Bahrain Defence Force (BDF) and regulates wages and allowances for members of the BDF, volunteers, and civilians.

The approval came around two weeks after the majority of members of the Council of Representatives approved the decree law and referred it to the Shura Council.

Council members yesterday voted for the decree law during their regular weekly meeting, headed by Shura Council Chairman Ali Saleh Al Saleh.

In their statements during the session, the members expressed full support to the decree law, as they reaffirmed that it represents a key factor to support the security and stability of the Kingdom and its people.

As reported earlier, the legislation obliges private sector establishments of paying 30 per cent of wages of individuals conscripted in the military reserve force, while it mandates the public sector of paying the salary of the reserve force member

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per cent of wages of the proposed Reserve Force will be paid by the private sector.

who is called to serve in the force in case of emergency, war, or general mobilisation measures.

The decree-law also stipulates that private sector establishments shall contribute to paying the wages of the members of the force for one year, while BDF will bear the disbursement of salaries if the soldiers continue serving in the force for more than one year.

A military reserve force is a military organisation composed of citizen-soldiers of a country who combine a military role or career with a civilian career. These individuals consist of retired military personnel, as well as civilian volunteers.

They are not always kept under arms and their main role is to be available to join the army and fight when their military requires additional manpower in cases of war or emergencies.

BTEA to open 'Saturday Market' at Bab Al Bahrain

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In line with its efforts to develop the local tourism sector and increase its contribution to the national GDP, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) is set to host the second edition of its 'Saturday Market', which will be held every Saturday from 9 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm starting from the 25th of January until the 22nd of March 2020, in Bab Al Bahrain at the heart of the Manama Souq.

During the Formula 1 Bahrain Grand Prix 2020, the Saturday Market will be open to visitors for four consecutive days.

With its main focus centred on hosting a market where craftsmen can showcase and sell their handicrafts products, the 'Saturday Market' is held at Bab Al Bahrain every winter with an aim of developing the handicrafts sector in the Kingdom.

This year, the event will feature 40 craftsmen specialised in 25 crafts including basket weaving, traditional chests, wooden works, pottery, hand embroidery, henna design, dolls, carpets, cage-making, and crochet among others.

In addition, the event will feature live traditional performances, traditional Bahraini food vendors, and activities and play areas for children.

In addition to showcasing the work of local craftsman, the Saturday Market aims to encourage Bahraini youth to engage in craft projects in order to preserve the local handicrafts as a trade which is unique to the Kingdom of Bahrain, BTEA said in a statement issued.

In order to give all participants the opportunity to gain maximum exposure while driving the development of the tourism industry, the participating craftsmen will be alternated regularly throughout the duration of the event, the statement added.

Hosting the Saturday Market comes in line with BTEA's long-term strategy which focuses on developing unique tourism products and further developing the Kingdom's tourism sector and strengthening its position on regional and international levels under the slogan of 'Ours. Yours.', which contributes towards the Kingdom's economy and the 2030 Economic Vision.

30 years of success



More than 200 guests including keynote speakers and toastmasters from across the Kingdom attended the 30th anniversary celebrations of 'The Indian Club Toastmasters section' at the Indian Club. Chief Guest Dr Mariam Ebrahim Al Hajeri hailed the efforts and contributions of ICT and Indian Club towards community welfare. Indian doctor Dr A K Sandhu was felicitated for her lifetime service in the field of Gynaecology and Obstetrics in Bahrain for the past 36 years. Indian Club President Stalin Joseph attended.

Soccer event



Bahrain Chapter of ICAI organised a football event for its members and family at Soccer Avenue, Saar. Solidarity, Tally, Al Areen Palace and Spa, Asma Capital, UAE Exchange and ICICI Bank were the team sponsors. Trafco, Al Jazira and Middle East Hospital were the support sponsors. UAE Exchange Team were crowned the Champions.

Renewable energy projects discussed at meeting

Manama

A committee in charge of following up the plan of the national committee for renewable energy and power efficiency held its fifteenth meeting.

Sustainable Energy Authority (SEA) President Dr Abdulhussein Mirza chaired the session, which was also attended by senior officials represent-

ing ministries and government departments. The UN Resident Co-ordinator in the Kingdom of Bahrain was also present.

Dr Mirza hailed efforts being exerted by different government departments, which play a key role in the achievements in the fields of renewable energy and power efficiency.

The meeting focused on a number of global financing mechanisms that can



Dr Mirza chairs the meeting.

be used to support renewable energy and power efficiency projects in Bahrain, including the mechanisms to take advantage of the Green Fund to address climate change.

The representative of the National Oil and Gas Authority (NOGA) delivered a visual presentation highlighting the possibility of establishing national investment portfolios for promoting sustainable energy.