

Key role of chartered accountants in focus

THE 10th annual International Conference of the Bahrain Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (BCICAI) opened at the Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel Residence and Spa yesterday.

More than 400 delegates from the GCC and India are attending the event held under the patronage of Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed Alrayani.

The opening ceremony was attended by Indian Ambassador Alok Kumar Sinha, Industry, Commerce and Tourism Ministry assistant under-secretary for domestic trade Hameed Yasif Rahma, assistant under-secretary for commercial registrations and companies Ali Abdulhussain Mahi and KPMG managing partner Jamal Fakhro.

In his keynote address, Pujya Brahmaviharidas Swami of the BAPS Foundation said change is

inevitable, inescapable and cannot be categorised as good or bad.

"Since change is inescapable, we have to tackle it by adjusting ourselves, anticipating it, attuning ourselves to it and also changing ourselves without giving up on our spiritual and ethical values," he said.

Mr Sinha highlighted the transformative impact of the changes that India has embraced such as GST and said that Bahrain too was poised to benefit from new perspectives on economic and national growth.

Mr Fakhro said: "With change, there is always growth and we must learn to swim with the current."

Economic Development Board CEO Khalid Al Rumaihi will address the forum today. Topics include social innovation, the impact of technology (AI, blockchain, cybersecurity) on accountancy procedures, Bahrain 2030 and integration of AI.



■ Mr Fakhro lights the traditional lamp as Mr Sinha, BCICAI officials and guests look on

Centre hopes to raise BD10,000

● Drive to promote women's empowerment

By RAJ UNNIKRISHNAN

A LOCAL group dedicated to helping victims of abuse is hoping to raise BD10,000 in support of women's empowerment activities.

The Women's Crisis Care International (WCCI) is hosting a fundraiser in the form of a masquerade ball on Thursday at La Fontaine Centre of Contemporary Art.

Tickets are still available to the event, which will be held under the theme 'Celebrate the Colours of Empowerment' and aims to support the group's activities for the next year.

Highlights of the evening will include a dinner, classical dancers, an art exhibition, an auction, a raffle draw and an award for the best-masked guest, alongside a concert by Bahraini artist Banah and a magic show by French artist Mary Lou.

WCCI founder Mary-Justine Todd said all proceeds from the event will go towards supporting women's empowerment programmes at WCCI, which mainly include an advocacy programme in which over 120 trained women support victims of domestic or sexual violence through two helplines – in Arabic and English.

"We have two 24/7 hotlines in Arabic and English, which are manned by first responders or advocates who are trained free of charge," she told the GDN.

"WCCI requires all volunteers to complete a 40-hour training before starting as a volunteer crisis advocate along with training



■ Poster of the ball



■ WCCI reaches out to women in need of help



■ The fundraiser is themed on women empowerment

manuals and materials. "WCCI provides personal support for women who have been subjected to domestic or sexual violence as well as medium and

long-term casework support for victims of abuse.

"We also provide community education and outreach to support women's empowerment

"Occasionally, a woman needs safe refuge but has no family to stay with and because she is scared to file a police report against her abuser, she will not be able to stay in a shelter.

"In these cases, WCCI will pay for several nights in a secure hotel location until she can figure out another plan of action.

"Sometimes the children of victims do not speak Arabic and thus can't enter public schools – in these cases, WCCI pays for the school fees until alternative arrangements can be made."

Ms Todd said the theme of Thursday's ball was empowering women, both victims of violence and the wider community.

"We hope to inspire and encourage women into the purpose of our programmes which is not just supporting the victims of abuse, but also to encourage them and in turn empower," she added.

"Most of the evening's programmes are unique and guests are invited to come and celebrate with WCCI, wearing colourful and elaborate masks that reflect their own creativity, colour and empowerment to support women and families."

Tickets to the ball cost BD30 and for more information, contact 38401656.

The GDN earlier reported that WCCI's clients increased by 400 per cent from launching its operations in 2016 to last year, and by another 200pc from last year to this year. In the last 12 months, WCCI has worked to empower women, during more than 500 situations of abuse, violence and harassment.

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