



جمعية حماية العمال الوافدين  
Migrant Workers Protection Society  
(MWPS)

## MISSION STATEMENT

TO CREATE A COMMUNITY  
WHERE EXPATRIATE  
RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED  
AND TO RAISE AWARENESS  
OF THESE RIGHTS AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES

## GIFTS OF GRACE



With the holy month on the horizon, Ramadan gift boxes were distributed to approximately 100 workers residing in a labour camp in Um Al Hassam. Generously provided by MWPS chairperson Mona Almoayyed, these boxes serve as a token of support and solidarity for the labour community.

# MIGRANT VOICE

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY

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SOMETIMES THE PEOPLE  
AROUND YOU WON'T  
UNDERSTAND YOUR JOURNEY.  
THEY DON'T NEED TO - IT'S  
NOT FOR THEM.

JOUBERT BOTHA



## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON...

As we launch the second edition of "Migrant Voice" for the month of February, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of you for your dedicated efforts in making this newsletter a reality. Your commitment to amplifying the voices of expatriates and advocating for their rights is truly commendable.

It's important to remember that our role as the MWPS team is not just to inform, but to empower and inspire. Through "Migrant Voice," we have the opportunity to shed light on the experiences and challenges faced by expats, and to be a catalyst for positive change in their lives.

As we move forward, let us recommit ourselves to the cause of expat voices and rights. Let's continue to be a platform for their stories, a voice for their concerns, and an advocate for their well-being. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of expatriates around the world.

Thank you once again for your hard work and dedication. Let's continue to make "Migrant Voice" a powerful instrument for positive change.

With warm regards,

**MONA ALMOAYYED**

CHAIRPERSON

MIGRANT WORKERS PROTECTION SOCIETY

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## SPOTLIGHT

### MEET THE TEAM

Get to know the exceptional individuals behind the MWPS scenes in this segment.



#teammwps

## A JOURNEY OF ADVOCACY

EVONE VIJAYAVANI BHASKARAN  
VICE CHAIRPERSON

Evone Vijayavani Bhaskaran, the vice chairperson of MWPS, is a wife, mother, teacher, pastor, and social worker from the beautiful land of Sri Lanka. She arrived in Bahrain in 1989, joining her architect husband and began her career as a teacher in 1986. After devoting 10 years to education, in 1998, she stepped away from teaching to dedicate herself to helping those in need. This journey led her to become involved with social work in 2004 and a founding member of MWPS in 2005.

Over the years, she became a member, assistant head and eventually the head of the Action Committee, until in 2023, when she assumed the position of MWPS vice chairperson.

As a social worker for over two decades, Ms Bhaskaran has collaborated with other organisations, embassies, and authorities, ensuring justice and support for the voiceless. This journey, says Ms Bhaskaran, has been made possible by the unwavering support of her loving family, the church community, and individuals who have been instrumental in every step.

## SRI LANKA CONSIDERS HOUSEMAID BAN

## BULLETIN

Sri Lanka's Labour and Foreign Employment Minister, Manusha Nanayakkara, has called for a paradigm shift in the nation's approach to sending women abroad for domestic work. He urged the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies to submit proposals and plans to completely cease sending Sri Lankan women overseas to work as housemaids.

During a discussion held with the members of the Association of Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies, the minister stressed the significance of halting the practice of sending women for overseas employment as domestic workers. Instead, he proposed redirecting their focus towards seeking foreign jobs in skilled categories, thereby enhancing their earning potential and professional growth prospects.

Moreover, the minister emphasised that the proposals put forward by the Bureau and the Association should reflect the collective views and suggestions of all stakeholders involved in the process. He reiterated the government's ambitious goal of completely halting Sri Lankan women's migration overseas for domestic work within the next decade, emphasising the need to enhance opportunities for them to secure employment in skilled categories.

### NOBLE SHOTS



Top Shots Bahrain Netball Club hosted a spirited fundraiser netball tournament, uniting players and supporters for a noble cause. With collective efforts and generous donations, the tournament raised BD400 each for MWPS and the Red Crescent's Gaza Appeal.

### NMS SHINES

The New Millenium School held a very successful charity drive, raising BD 300 for the MWPS at the ninth New Millenium Model United Nations Conference held in November 2023.



## EDITORIAL

Bahrain stands as a beacon of opportunity and hospitality for expatriates worldwide, offering a welcoming environment for those seeking employment and new beginnings. However, amidst the vibrant expat life, we often encounter distressing tales of sudden tragedies and unforeseen challenges faced by our fellow expatriates.

At MWPS, we recognise the vital role organisations like ours play in providing support and guidance to expats living in Bahrain. Yet, it's crucial to pause and reflect on the underlying lessons these incidents impart.

Time and again, ignorance of local laws, non-compliance, and unfortunate instances of fraud emerge as common threads in these narratives. To safeguard ourselves, it's imperative that we, as expatriates, equip ourselves with knowledge of our rights, the law of the land, and key safety measures.

From ensuring the validity of our work visas and job contracts to staying informed about embassy details and keeping our families abreast of our employment arrangements, proactive steps can significantly mitigate risks.

Furthermore, embracing Bahrain's customs and traditions fosters cultural respect and integration, contributing to a harmonious expat experience.

As we strive to secure our safety and well-being, MWPS stands as a steadfast ally, providing essential support and resources to empower expatriates in Bahrain. Together, let's navigate expat life with vigilance, resilience, and a commitment to nurturing a healthy and inclusive community.

Happy reading!

**RAJI UNNIKRISHNAN**

EDITOR - MIGRANT VOICE

## OUTREACH

As the month of February unfolded, MWPS diligently addressed several cases, offering essential support to expatriates going through challenging circumstances in the country. Each of these cases, regardless of scale, represents a testament to resilience and assistance, reaffirming MWPS's steadfast dedication to serving the expat community.

### CASE 01

Ramu, an Indian national, arrived in Bahrain in 2016 with a work visa as a mason, only to face a series of hardships. Unpaid by his employer, he sought to change companies after three months but was denied his passport by his sponsor without a hefty fee. Unable to afford the payment, Ramu resorted to working as a daily wage laborer without a valid visa or passport. Unaware of the formal procedures to reclaim his passport, he remained in limbo, struggling to support his family. With MWPS's intervention, navigating the bureaucratic hurdles, and paying his immigration penalty fee, Ramu was finally able to return to India and reunite with his loved ones.

### CASE 02

Kirisan, a Sri Lankan national, arrived in Bahrain with hopes of pursuing opportunities in Canada, having paid 15 lakhs (SLRs) to a compatriot promising assistance. However, for eight months, he found himself confined to a room without access to his passport. Seeking assistance, Kirisan reached out to MWPS, prompting the organisation to act by lodging complaints with both the Sri Lankan Embassy and local authorities. With MWPS's intervention, Kirisan regained possession of his passport and safely returned to Sri Lanka.

## GALLERY

Throughout February, distributions of dry goods and blankets reached diverse groups of needy workers across Bahrain, including jobless individuals, those facing salary delays, and domestic and construction workers. Locations included Galali, Hamala, Hamad Town, Um Al Hassam, Adliya, Gudaibiya, and Manama.



## INSIGHT

## LOCAL TRANSFER (MOBILITY)

By MADHAVAN KALLATH

*Mobility is a term that we often hear in the context of expat employment in the kingdom. What do you know about mobility or in simpler terms, local transfer? What are its legalities? Read this quick piece to understand how you can safely change jobs. Educate yourself on the law that will help you to avoid legal hassles as you change jobs.*

The best way that one can change his or her job is with the consent of the current employer. The employer should give his or her consent or MOBILITY, online on the account of the employee in the Labour Market Regulatory Authority's (LMRA) Expat Management System (EMS). A letter of consent is not enough to gain mobility. Mobility should be registered in the LMRA system. The advantage for an employer who allows mobility for an employee online is that he or she will get credit for the visa fee for the unexpired period of the employee's visa.

Another option for leaving or changing jobs is for the current employer to cancel the visa for the employee, and the latter could request that his or her new employer apply for a new visa.

Now, if the current employer is not agreeing to give a transfer to another employer, it may be noted that Article 25 of Act No. 19 of 2006, with regard to regulation of the labour market (LMRA law), permits a foreign worker to change his employment to another employer without obtaining the consent of the current employer.

In this case, an employee should follow this procedure:

1. Send a resignation letter by registered post to the address of the employer as shown in the commercial register of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. An acknowledgement card, which would be provided by the post office, should be attached to the envelope while sending the letter.
2. The notice period in the resignation letter should match the period provided in the employment contract. However, if the contract provides for a notice of more than three (3) months, the maximum notice required to be given is only three months.
3. On receipt of the acknowledgement card through the post office, the new employer would be able to apply for the visa. The employee should not start working with the new employer until the visa is approved and paid for.
4. There may be a situation where the current employer refuses to accept the registered letter of resignation. In such cases, the envelope would be returned by the post office to the employee. The unopened envelope may be handed to the new employer for uploading a copy along with the visa application to prove that the requirement of sending a resignation letter was completed.
5. If the notice is given for less than three (3) months, the LMRA would require a copy of the employment contract showing the notice period. This should be attached to the application for the visa.

To apply for transfer of employment during validity of the visa, the remaining validity of the visa should be a minimum of three months at the time of application. If it is proposed to apply for a transfer after expiry of the visa without the consent of the current employer, it is advisable to register mobility with the LMRA at least one month before the expiry of the visa. Otherwise, the LMRA would process the application only one month after the expiration of the visa, as the current employer is eligible to renew the visa during this period.

An employee need not leave the country in order to change his or her job under the mobility law. In fact, the mobility transfer cannot be requested if the employee is not in Bahrain. Once the application for transfer is submitted under the mobility law, the employee cannot leave the country until the visa is approved. If he or she leaves, the application will be automatically cancelled.

(For any queries contact the MWPS on 17827895 or mwpsbah2@gmail.com)

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