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Government launches five-point jobs plan

MANAMA: A FIVE-POINT Government plan has been launched to dramatically increase the number of jobs for Bahrainis.

More than 2,000 companies do not employ a single Bahraini, it has been revealed.

All those companies must instantly employ at least one Bahraini, under a new law.

All private companies must also progressively increase the number of Bahrainis to 50 percent of their workforce,

By SOMAN BABY

under regulations approved by the Cabinet.

Private companies employing less than 10 workers should have at least one Bahraini employee, under the law.

Companies employing 10 workers or more, where the number of Bahrainis is less than 50pc, must increase their percentage by 5pc every year.

The strategy was approved by the Cabi-

net at its meeting last week, chaired by Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Sulman Al Khalifa.

Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala has now revealed the details of the plan.

He said the number of companies registered with the General Organisation for Social Insurance (Gosi) had reached 3,437 at the end of last year.

"However, 2,075 of them do not employ a single Bahraini, though their total

workforce is 16,341," he said.

"This situation is quite alarming. Under the new plan, all these establishments should employ at least one Bahraini each, with immediate effect."

Mr Al Sho'ala said the number of Bahrainis employed in the private sector, according to the Gosi statistics, had reached 29.7pc of the total.

"However, a series of measures are now being implemented to further

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Bahrain to launch 5-point jobs plan

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increase this percentage and to encourage the private sector to increase work opportunities for Bahrainis," he said.

The five-point plan is:

- The number of Bahrainis in every organisation employing 10 workers or more should not be less than 50pc. Those who have not achieved the 50pc target, should increase the number of Bahrainis by 5pc annually over the next five years.

- Those who have achieved 50pc Bahrainisation will not be forced into the annual increment of 5pc, provided there is no drop in the percentage already achieved.

- Every organisation employing less than 10 people must have at least one Bahraini employee, in addition to the owner.

- For new projects, involving local or foreign investment, the number of Bahraini employees should be only 20pc in the first year. Their number should thereafter be increased by 5pc every year.

- Government contracts and purchase orders will not be awarded to companies which fail to fulfil the above requirements.

Bahrainisation will be made a pre-condition for accepting tenders. Companies employing more Bahrainis will receive preferential treatment when Government contracts are awarded.

Mr Al Sho'ala said 358 com-

panies in the private sector were each employing more than 50pc Bahrainis.

On the achievement in the area of training, which was also reviewed by the Cabinet, he said BD21,769,618 was spent on training under the supervision of the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry last year.

The total spent on training by the Government and the private sector, including the 10 major companies which have their own training centres was BD35 million last year, said Mr Al Sho'ala.

"The number of people trained under the programme was 29,737, of whom 5,011 have entered the labour market," he said.

Mr Al Sho'ala said plans were under way to ensure that expatriates brought to Bahrain were employed in

the same jobs for which work permits have been granted.

"This is to stop the practice by some companies which apply for permits to recruit foreigners for certain positions, for which qualified Bahrainis are not available. Once they reach Bahrain, they are put on a different job," he said.

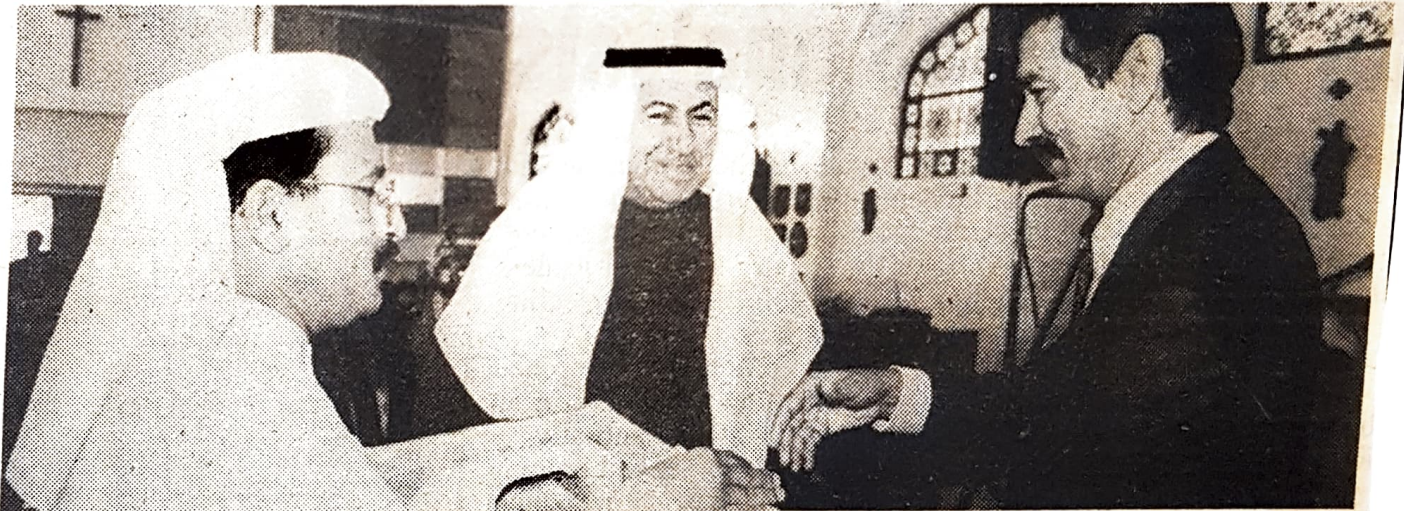
"Under the new system under study, employers may be asked to furnish certificates to prove the qualifications and experience of the candidates whom they intend to recruit," said Mr Al Sho'ala.



■ Mr Al Sho'ala

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■VISIT ... Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala visited the Full Gospel Church of Philadelphia at the St Christopher's Cathedral yesterday. A braille machine for the blind was donated by the church during his visit. Above, representative of the Al Noor Institute for the Blind, Abdul Wahid Al Khayyat, left, receiving the donation from pastor Dr Rev Victor Rosado, as Mr Al Sho'ala looks on.