

# Bahrain labour minister wants labourers to be fully aware of their rights

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- By Habib Toumi, Bahrain Bureau Chief
- Published: 15:34 April 30, 2010

Manama: Bahrain's labour minister has insisted that workers should be fully aware of the company's rules and regulations to ensure that his rights are preserved.

"The employee or labourers should prove that he had read or understood the rules and regulations by signing a document," Majeed Al Alawi said. "We should not accept the claim that most companies post their regulations and bylaws on the Internet since around 70 per cent of employees are computer illiterate and have nothing to do with Information Technology," Al Alawi told the upper chamber amid attempts by some of its members to side with companies and to drop the clause requiring the signature of the employees to acknowledge their awareness of the bylaws, rights and duties.

"Why should you be scared or worried about this clause? It provides protection to the employees and employers at the same time. An employer has to show the rules and an employee has to know them," Al Alawi said.

The minister said that he wants to make sure that the rights of employees should be fully protected.

"We have around 66,000 commercial registrations, but only 66 trade unions. How can trade unions defend employees and labourers regarding rules, regulations, duties and rights?" asked Al Alawai, a former opposition figure who was given the labour portfolio in 2002.

Roughly half of Bahrain's total population are foreigners, mainly labourers in the booming construction sector. Most of the hired labour is from the Asian continent.

Workers in Bahrain's private sector have the right to form and join trade unions