



More than 160 people attended a gala dinner of Bahrain Rotary clubs to mark the appointment of incoming leaders last night. The event, at Golden Tulip Hotel, saw outgoing presidents from the Rotary clubs of Salmaniya, Adliya and Manama hand over the reins to new officials. Outgoing Rotary Club of Manama president Ussama Hamza made way for Raj Damani, outgoing Rotary Club of Salmaniya president Abdulrahman Fakhro for Rodolphe Melki and outgoing Rotary Club of Adliya president Hassan Al Balushi for Mahmood Al Yousif.

360 vow pay protest after talks crumble

By CHARLIE HOLDING

MORE than 360 DHL staff are set to strike after crunch talks aimed at resolving a four-month dispute over pay and conditions failed yesterday.

Members of the company's trade union earlier threatened to take the matter to International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) if their demands for salary increases and allowances were not met by June 27.

Officials said although the company had made certain concessions, including introducing a heat allowance, transport allowance and health insurance for the family of staff, those demands were not top of their list of priorities.

It was hoped a last-minute meeting between union and company officials could prevent the strike but the talks failed.

Workers are now set to strike within the next two weeks, however, it was last night unclear whether they would down tools for one day or longer.

"There is still no increase in salary, we have categorised our demands by importance and the raise in salary was at the top," said DHL Trade Union member and operations controller Ahmed Ali.

"It seems that a strike is the only solution, we sent a letter to the Works Ministry and another to the company informing them that we are planning to strike within the next weeks."

DHL staff already have the backing of General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions.

"We always recommend trying to reach a compromise before taking action such as strikes, but no trade union will strike unless there is a real problem," said private sector assistant secretary Karim Radhi.

"The union would not have taken this step unless there was a lack of dialogue to try and solve the problems."

A DHL spokesman stressed the company was committed to providing fair remuneration to its staff.

"DHL Express Bahrain introduced (on June 27) new allowances and extended medical benefits for its staff," she said. "These newly introduced benefits are in addition



The DHL building ... last-ditch bid to end dispute fails

to an overall average salary increase of more than five per cent implemented in April for DHL Express employees in Bahrain.

"DHL affirms its commitment to provide fair remuneration based on meritocracy, and in keeping with the industry benchmark."

The spokeswoman added officials had not given up hope of resolving the dispute before the proposed strike.

"We stand committed to Bahrain, our employees and the well-being of their families," she said.

"We continue to engage the union with the aim of assuring a positive outcome."

Employees last month wore yellow armbands for 10 days as a symbol of their dissatisfaction with the negotiations between the company and the union.

They later switched to red armbands to symbolise that the dispute was in danger of escalating.

Workers initially set a June 18 deadline for their demands to be met but extended it after a meeting with company officials.



Children practise during their first aid session

Pupils learn first aid skills at workshop

More than 50 St Christopher's Junior First Aid After School Club pupils celebrated the completion of a 10-week course held at the school in Saar. They were given an insight into basic first aid with mock casualties coming for treatment. They included Megan McMurdo, Rebekah McMurdo, Emily Atkinson, Hayley Loftus, Jessica Vine, while helpers were Jan Hodgeson, Pamela McCallum, Pam Kamal, Juliette Potter, Anne Cassin and Gill Prestwood. Below, pupils checking first aid kit.

