

From the Editor

The domestic staff dilemma

The shockwaves from the brutal murder of a young mother; a pillar of her community, continue to reverberate through our nation. As details emerge confirming that the alleged perpetrator is a former domestic employee dismissed last year, the collective grief of the public has curdled into something just as potent; fear. The question we are all asking is: How do we protect ourselves from the malcontents in this indispensable profession?

This is the domestic staff dilemma. We are a society that, for reasons of time, economics, and logistics, often cannot function without help. Yet, recent events suggest that the very people we invite into our sanctuaries can, in rare but terrifying cases, become the architects of our tragedy.



So, how do we do it right?

The era of hiring based on a casual recommendation from a neighbour's cousin must end. We must treat the process of hiring domestic staff with the same rigor as hiring a corporate employee. This means formalising contracts, setting clear expectations, and crucially, conducting due diligence. Verification of identity documents, seeking references from previous, verifiable employers, and utilising community policing forums to check for any red flags should become standard practice, not an exception.

We must rethink the illusion of total privacy. In an age of technology, small security measures, such as securing Wi-Fi networks, being mindful of where sensitive documents are left, and even the discreet use of security cameras in common areas (with full disclosure to the worker, to maintain trust), can act as deterrents.

Lastly, we cannot live in a state of perpetual siege, suspicious of every person who washes our dishes. But we can no longer afford to be naive. The murder of this young mother demands that we stop treating domestic staff as merely a convenience and start treating the employment relationship as a serious, professional, and security-conscious partnership.

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