

International show for disabled opens today

BAHRAIN is reinforcing its position as a pioneer in the rehabilitation of the disabled with the hosting of a major international exhibition which opens here today. Fifteen countries are taking part in the first Arab Exhibition of the Products of Rehabilitation Centres and Productive Families Projects at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre.

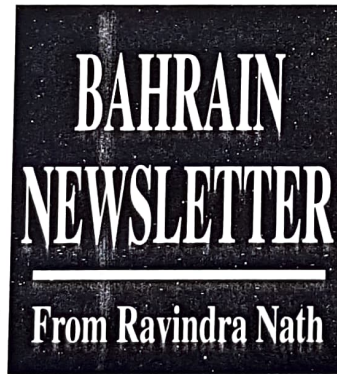
The six-day show, which will be officially inaugurated by Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa bin Sulman Al Khalifa, marks the first step in a new pan-Arab drive aimed at rehabilitating the less fortunate members of the society, and will highlight the efforts made by governments of the region in this field.

The exhibition is also expected to identify the aims of national projects in the rehabilitation and productive families sectors and traditional handicrafts so that proper promotional strategies for their development could be evolved.

The decision to hold the event in Bahrain was taken at the 15th meeting of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs in Cairo in December 1995, and today's opening ceremony is expected to be attended by Arab League Secretary-General Dr Esmat Abdel-Meguid and ministers from all the participating countries — Egypt, Jordan, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Morocco, Palestine, Libya, Yemen, Sudan and Algeria, besides Bahrain.

"It is directed at the handicapped and the needy segment of the society who deserve all support to function normally as other citizens," Bahrain's Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala said. He added that the participation of a large number of countries reflected the importance attached to the event and the fact that "they are convinced of the noble message at which it aims."

He said the exhibition would enhance the awareness of the Bahraini



and the Gulf public of the issue of care of the handicapped and the needy families.

Several experts in the field will give lectures during workshops to be held on the sidelines of the show, the entire organisational and marketing costs of which are being borne by Bahrain. There will also be live demonstration of traditional crafts. From Bahrain, 15 productive families and

several companies and ministries are taking part.

Industrial awards

THE government's announcement of a new award for industrial excellence has received a wholehearted welcome from Bahrain's business community. They are unanimous in their view that the move would give a big push to industrial production in the country and step up exports.

The decision to institute the annual awards, to be named after the prime minister, was taken at a meeting of the cabinet last week. Giving details at a new conference later, Minister of Oil and Industry Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa said Shaikh Khalifa bin Sulman Al Khalifa Awards for Industrial Achievement were aimed at improving performance in all areas of industry.

Winners of the first awards, he said, would be announced on December 1, and the prizes, the nature of which are

yet to be finalised, would be presented by the prime minister at an awards ceremony later the same month.

"The awards are in recognition and acknowledgement of achievements in industry... We have not decided the prizes yet, but the fact that they are being given under the patronage of the prime minister in itself is a reward," Shaikh Isa said.

There will be at least five prizes for various segments of industry, including petro-chemicals, food and pharmaceuticals, aluminium and workshops, and the winners will be decided on the basis of their performance in five areas — exports, production, quality, environmental and safety aspects and training and Bahrainisation.

The winners will be selected by an advisory committee consisting of officials from the ministry and other concerned bodies. All organisations, large, medium and small, can vie for the prizes, which are valid for three years.