

Bahrain

Bahrain 'must find

● Evolution of modern state is highlighted

By INDIRA CHAND

VISION and the courage to face change hold the key to the continued prosperity of Bahrain, says one of the country's pioneers.

This timeless formula has been followed by Bahrain's past rulers and has provided a solid foundation for the country's progress in modern times, said former Development and Industry Minister Yousuf Shirawi.

He was speaking during the inaugural dinner of the Bahrain Management Society (BMS) last night.

The event, at Le Royal Meridien Hotel, was held under the patronage of Cabinet Affairs and Information Minister Mohammed Al Mutawa.

Mr Shirawi's talk traced the evolution of government administration in Bahrain from 1870 to 1960.

"The progress of Bahrain was achieved because the rulers had the

Society to boost management skills

MODERN management is becoming as critical an issue for developing countries as technology, said Bahrain Management Society (BMS) president Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Sulman Al Khalifa.

The newly-established BMS plans to address the challenge of developing management practices, he said.

"The foundation of the society has emerged as a natural consequence of the well-conceived development process being witnessed in Bahrain," said Shaikh Khalid.

"It is to enhance the efforts of our leadership in managing the optimum utilisation of Bahrain's natural and human resources."

A principal objective of the society, which was the first of its kind in the GCC, was to emphasise professionalism as a fundamental and integral requirement of a manager, he said.

vision to introduce change and the people had the nerve to accept it," said Mr Shirawi.

"As long as this formula is followed, no matter what the problems or constitutional crises, Bahrain will be okay."

He said the roots of this winning formula could be traced to 1869,

when Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa became the ruler of Bahrain.

"Although the Al Khalifas came to Bahrain 100 years before, those years were an unstable period," said Mr Shirawi.

"The Al Khalifas had meagre resources, there were adverse problems on the mainland and in Iran,

"This is an aim which we shall endeavour to achieve in co-operation with Government and private establishments," said Shaikh Khalid.

Other objectives include contributions to developing the concept of management as a scientific discipline, he said.

This would be achieved through organisation of specific conferences, seminars and workshops and was also aimed at enhancing the society's management database and utilising it effectively in addressing management issues.

"It is this which has prompted our realisation that the gap in management know-how, which separates the advanced societies from developing communities, is as critical as the gap in technological inequality," said Shaikh Khalid.

"Thus, developing management practices in such a situation is a challenging issue for our society, especially as we look ahead to the next century."

there were problems with tribes in the Gulf and with the imperial powers (the Turks and the British) and problems at home."

Shaikh Isa bin Ali, who had gone to Zubara after a battle with his uncle, was "chosen by the people of Bahrain", to be the ruler.

This was the start of Bahrain's

Bahrain

courage to tackle change'



■EVENT ... The Bahrain Management Society held its inaugural dinner at the Le Royal Meridien last night. Above, at the dinner are, left, Mr Shirawi, Mr Al Mutawa, Labour and Social Affairs Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala and Commerce Minister Ali Saleh Al Saleh. Also present was Electricity and Water Minister Abdulla Juma. Right, Shaikh Khalid

success story in modern times, said Mr Shirawi.

"Shaikh Isa bin Ali settled with the British and solved other problems and, slowly, Bahrain began to emerge as the centre of the Gulf," he said.

As stability ushered in peace and with peace came progress, so did all the elements of modern progress, such as steamer ships, not dhows, post and telegraph and other organised services.

Bahrain's total trade, which amounted to Rupees 6 million in 1870, had grown three times to Rs 18m by the

turn of the 20th century.

"But all this was not without opposition from the people of Bahrain," said Mr Shirawi.

The First World War transformed Bahrain into a communications centre and the 1920s brought in its own problems, with the ruler becoming old, the British pushing for reforms and resistance to change from the people.

As a result, Shaikh Isa bin Ali retired in 1922 and Shaikh Hamad bin Isa became the deputy ruler, becoming Amir when Shaikh Isa bin Ali died in 1932.

"Shaikh Hamad felt the need for a modern government. He wanted a central government and brought in a British advisor, Sir Charles Belgrave, who was not the cause of reform, but the effect of it," said Mr Shirawi.

Shaikh Hamad spent the first 10 years of his rule laying down the foundation of a new state, the budget of the rulers was separate from the state budget, Sharia and civil courts were introduced and health services and education were ushered in.

"Then in 1932, three things happened,

Shaikh Isa bin Ali died (and Shaikh Hamad became the ruler), the first airplane of British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) landed in Bahrain and in June that year oil was found in Bahrain," said Mr Shirawi.

"So, Bahrain was ready and willing for change and progress."

Shaikh Hamad pushed for a refinery to be established in Bahrain and this happened six years later.

"Earlier, education which had been religious and sectarian, was nationalised and this helped the unity of Bahrain,"

said Mr Shirawi.

When Shaikh Sulman bin Hamad came to power, at the death of his father in 1942, he was "not new to the job".

He had spent 20 years in government before he came to power and it was during his rule that Bahrain's industrial base and infrastructure was built, said Mr Shirawi.

He said HH the Amir Shaikh Isa bin Sulman had brought in the "brain industry, education, culture, universities and technical colleges and independence became a natural process."

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Bahrain skills boost

● Top training group starts regional office

A BD150 million American training group has chosen Bahrain as its Middle East headquarters.

The National Education Training Group (NETG), an organisation with its corporate headquarters in Naperville, Illinois, and international headquarters in London, launched its Bahrain office at a reception hosted by the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry at Le Royal Meridien Hotel.

Minister Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala led the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry team at the ceremony, which was also attended by top officials of the Education Ministry and the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

NETG vice president (international) Roy Sunley said at the reception that the office would cater to the training needs of the Middle East in general and countries of the GCC in particular.

"Our aim is to provide multi-media training

By SOMAN BABY

programmes and facilities and be responsive to the specific needs of the region," he said.

NETG, established in 1968, has been operating in the Middle East since 1976 with offices in Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

"However, we have now found Bahrain, a centre of excellence and the ideal base to promote our activities in the Middle East," said Mr Sunley.

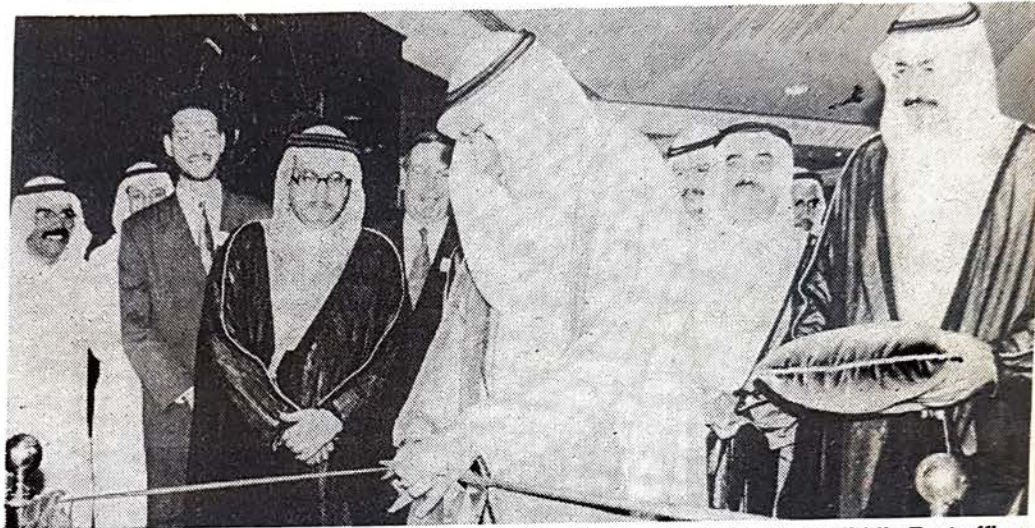
"NETG aims to offer courses and programmes that will be of high quality, innovative, cost-effective and more than all address the business objectives of companies."

A large number of NETG customers are listed in the "Fortune 100" and "Global 100", with their activities ranging from telecommunications, oil and energy to aerospace, finance, insurance and health care.

Mr Sunley said the group was currently offering 1,600 courses.

"More than 220 new courses will be added this year," he said.

"It will include some Arabic products to cater to the specific



■ CEREMONY ... Mr Al Sho'ala cuts a ribbon marking the launch of the NETG Middle East office, watched by Mr Sunley, fifth from left, Mr Sharaf, third from left, Assistant Under-Secretary for Planning and Training at the Labour Ministry Abdulrahman Al Zayani, second from right, and director of the Labour and Social Affairs Minister's officer Sabah Al Dosari.

needs of the region," he said.

"The establishment of our Middle East office in Bahrain demonstrates our commitment to the region.

"We propose to set up a Users Forum which will enable us to understand the specific needs of our customers and offer courses on curriculum basis as well."

Mr Sunley said NETG was grateful to the Bahrain Government in general and the Labour and Social Affairs Ministry in particular for their support, assistance and encouragement.

Mr Al Sho'ala said the activities of NETG would accrue ben-

efits to Bahrain's private sector.

"NETG is the first international company to establish its operations in Bahrain since the Ministry launched its promotional campaign last week designed to consolidate Bahrain's position as the regional centre for training and human resources development," he said.

Praising the initiative taken by the private sector in promoting Bahrain's status as a training centre, Mr Al Sho'ala said his ministry would render all possible assistance to international companies and training institutes keen on establishing their pres-

ence in the country.

"Bahrain offers immense opportunities for companies to promote training programmes on commercial basis in the region," he said.

Among those attending the reception were Education Under-Secretary Dr Hamad Al Sulaiti, American Ambassador David Ransom and top executives of leading private sector organisations.

Besides Mr Sunley, NETG was also represented by director (Middle East and Africa) and regional director for Bahrain, Majeed Sharaf.