

42 differently-abled children, youth participate in diving challenge event

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August 24, 2016



Forty-two children and youth with various disabilities are attending a four-day diving event at the Marina Bandar al Rowdha. Titled, 'Dive Challenge Tour', the event will conclude on Wednesday.

Children with autism, hearing and visual impairment, and other physical deformities are participating in the event.

The event is being organised by the Ministry of Sports Affairs with the help of the International Association for Handicapped Divers (IAHD). IAHD experts from the Netherlands are assisting the participants and training them in diving and aquatic therapy.

Gerard Oijnhausen, managing director, IAHD said, "We deal with children with disabilities from all over the world and ones from the sultanate are no exception. The water, at a temperature of 23°C, is comfortable for children. "Inside the water we all are helpless but with time and practice things change. For children with disabilities, aquatic therapy is great for their nervous system and psychology. It is one of the fastest methods to motivate and help them gain self-confidence."

Dr Wilheld Welslau, consultant diving and hyperbaric medicine said, "We also have doctors taking care of the children. The next stage is to take them to the sea where the water is 2m deep. But for that, we need more time and equipment."