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# Physically challenged experience thrill of scuba diving

By A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT The Oman Association for the Disabled (OAD) held a press conference to announce the launch of a unique programme and the first of its kind anywhere in the Middle East – the training of physically challenged persons in scuba diving – by an expert seven-member team of trainers of the International Association of Handicapped Divers (IAHD) – at the Oman Dive Centre in Qantab here on Thursday.

Besides the seven members of the IAHD, addressing the press conference was Stefanie Trier, who first conceived the idea of introducing such a programme for physically challenged divers and Tarek Jawad Al Khabori, the local representative of the IAHD.

Introducing Dirk Wondrak, regional manager, IAHD for Germany, Aus-



(From left) Officials from the Ministry of Sports, Stefanie Trier, Tarek Jawad Al Khabori, Daniel Zuidema and Dirk Wondrak at the press conference.

tria, Switzerland and Turkey, and one of the main speakers at the press conference, Stefanie Trier said that this was the first interaction the IAHD team was having with the press and hoped it would have a positive impact.

Speaking to the press,



Two physically challenged persons - Marhoun (left) and Saif recounting their first diving experience at the press conference.

Dirk explained that at this meeting the IAHD delegation would first train Omani divers. "There are two reasons for this. First, after we go back to our homes and working lives back in Germany and Holland, the Omani diving instructors we train over the next two days will be able to carry on the work after we have left. Instructors require a special kind of training to be able to handle physically challenged people. And secondly, these instructors can then carry on the work in a sustained manner."

Dirk, who is a fireman and paramedic back home in Germany, explained that scuba diving was one of the best sports for physically

challenged people. It is good both for physical as well as mental fitness.

Wheelchair-bound persons and paraplegics and even those suffering from muscular dystrophy will find that the natural buoyancy the human body experiences under water enables them to move with ease under water. This sense of newfound freedom of mobility works wonders for a person's self-confidence, he added.

Stefanie, who has been a diving instructor for the last five years here in Oman, said: "For the physically challenged, diving is good for the body as well as for the mind. It strengthens the muscles of the body. But more than that it does

wonders for a person's self-confidence and it gives them a positive, never-say-die attitude."

Al Khabori, Oman's IAHD representative, said: "It is a matter of great significance that Oman is the first and only country in the Middle East that has been chosen for this programme. We hope such exchanges and dialogue will become a regular feature".

Another IAHD representative Daniel Zuidema from Amsterdam, Holland, said that the encouraging response they had received from the people of Oman was overwhelming and they planned to do bigger projects in future.

Later, two wheelchair-bound persons Marhoun and Saif addressed the conference and recounted their exhilarating experience of diving in the sea for the first time in their lives the previous day. They exclaimed jubilantly: "Under the water there is another world. In this world we were able to forget completely that we have any kind of handicap or disability."

Later in the afternoon a special diving session for blind and visually-challenged persons was held. After that all the participants were given certificates from the IAHD. The seven-member IAHD team was also presented mementos.



GRAND OPENING: The new Park Inn Hotel was opened on Thursday. Ali Malallah Al Lawati, CEO of Al Habib Real Estate and the hotel, cuts the ribbon.

# Suhail Bahwan Group website bags silver in Web Awards

MUSCAT The "suhailbahwanguroup.com" has been awarded silver in a fiercely contested Corporate Website Category of Oman Web Awards competition, whose jury comprised a panel of luminaries from across the Arab world, according to a press release.

Recently refreshed to stay in tune with changing times and technology, the website reflects the truly diversified nature, the size and the business footprint of Suhail Bahwan Group (SBG).

Company information and the tracking of visits to the site reveals that the number of hits that this bilingual (English & Arabic) site has increased 4-5 folds compared to the previous year. On the basis of current hit frequency, the website remains on course to attract up to 5 million hits in the year.

Commenting on the award, Divyendu Kumar of SBG said: "The award is a recognition of the high quality of creative inputs and the content of the



website that the group's team has brought to bear. The increasing number of hits is also a substantive verdict that we highly cherish."

With a vision to "build, own and promote world-class businesses and brands internationally", the SBG is a highly diversified \$ 3 billion business conglomerate.

Established in the mid 1960's, this nearly five-decade old group currently employs approximately 15,000 people and is

involved in businesses in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (India).

The group has interests in fields as diverse as automobile distribution and marketing, engineering and construction, IT and telecommunication, steel and building materials, structural steel and pre-engineered building design and manufacturing, realty, travel & tourism, and logistics, among others.

Oman Tribune

# Al Wisal FM radio plans expansion

By A Staff Reporter

MUSCAT Al Wisal 96.5 FM radio owned by Sabco Media, is planning to expand its operations on the occasion of its first anniversary.

At a press conference held here on Thursday to mark the anniversary, Eihab A Abu Taha, general manager of Sabco Media, said Al Wisal will start broadcasting from Salalah in the near future. Al Wisal will be the

first private radio station in Salalah, he said. Al Wisal is also planning to start broadcasting in English this year from Muscat station, he added.

Taha said a month-long celebrations will begin on Saturday. Special programmes would be broadcast through the radio. The celebrations will include contests and prizes will be given to winners. A draw for the special grand prize would be held on April 19, he said. Taha said Sabco has plans to launch two more magazines in the coming days.

Nadim Attieh, general manager of Al Wisal FM, said they have plans to bring the whole Sultanate under coverage in different phases. He said Al Wisal will double its present signal strength. New equipment is being procured for the purpose. The sound quality will also be bettered in the coming days, he said. As part of the anniversary we will announce more new projects, in the coming days", he added.

He said the FM, which began with a staff strength of seven, has grown rapidly. The present staff strength is 20, he said. The coverage of GCC football cup by Al Wisal was a tremendous success and it has increased the popularity of the FM, Attieh said.

The portal of Al Wisal is also getting good response, Attieh added. The portal which registered 200 hits daily initially is now registering around 650 hits a day, he said.



Nadim Attieh, general manager of Al Wisal FM (extreme right), Eihab A Abu Taha, general manager of Sabco Media (middle), and Feroz Khan, director of sales and marketing of Sabco (extreme left), addressing a press conference in Muscat on Friday.

**To Whom It May Concern**



Oman Society of Engineers announces that Mr. George Girgis, passport No. 1742455, of Egypt, and who was working as a coordinator at the OSE Training, Conferences & Events Committee, is no longer representing the OSE, from March 1, 2009. Any one with whom he may deal in the name of the OSE shall bear one's own responsibility without owing any liabilities to the OSE. (This announcement is published at the responsibility of the advertiser)

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