

Khaleej Times Online > NATION

## Festival opens hidden wonders of science

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The Abu Dhabi Science Festival aims to engage students in fun, active learning experiences outside the classroom at two venues in Abu Dhabi.

It is expected to be one of the largest hands-on science events in the world. The festival opened at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) on Friday.

Feature opening performance at the Corniche was a stunt by Swiss pilot Yves Rossy, known as the 'Jetman' who flew across the sky and landed on the beach, much to the fascination of the spectators. Later, he held a talk with his eagerly waiting fans where he discussed the discoveries he made about free falling and how he developed and refined his invention. "This is the nearest thing to flying, like a bird," he expressed.

Mariam Khalifa, 10, who came with her sisters and mother at the festival was very impressed.

"I watched the Jetman and he did a very good drop. I liked it when he was moving in a circle, he was turning like a small ball," she described. She was with her sister Noura, 4, at the parachute workshop and was very excited when she successfully landed her parachute without breaking the passenger egg.

"I want to become an inventor too. I like science, maybe I will become a scientist," she enthused.

Dr Bunhead, a famous television scientist, also held a presentation with his heart-stopping, unbelievable and hilarious scientific contraptions of jaw-dropping displays of pyrotechnic wizardry. Other scientific experiments and hands-on workshops include creating smoke by pouring hot water on frozen carbon dioxide, creating bubbles, optical illusion, exploring the world of nanoscience and learning aromatic scents from different parts of the world. "We have different show everyday, tomorrow we will show an experiment about the air with the hover craft and about chemical reaction," explained RJ, a trained scientist from one of the workshop tents.

Anchor attraction at the Corniche is the award winning international blockbuster exhibition —the 1001 Inventions tent. 1001 Inventions is a global educational initiative that promotes awareness about scientific and cultural achievements in Muslim civilisation, celebrating discoveries that have had a huge but hidden influence on the modern world.

This is the first time that this touring exhibition is presented in Arabic-English where it reveals this astonishing heritage through education films, interactive experiences, motion-sensitive games, live demonstrations and models of engineering marvels, spread across seven zones within the exhibition. The 1001 Inventions will be at the Corniche till December 24, 2011.

Outside the 1001 Inventions tent is a power lift where children can test their strength by lifting a large vehicle using the basic engineering principle of pivot mechanism.

On the ground, and adding to the mounting excitement, are cacophony of musical sounds created by mishmash of metal objects, pipes, tubes, bottles, tiles and water. Other mental and physical stimulators are also available, including a labyrinth, gravity defying mirrors and motion simulators. "This is very good for the kids as they can learn a lot about the strange things around them. Some they already learn at school but they don't see them live like right now. It is also good for the parents as some of this are new for me too," commended Arwa Adiab, a Jordanian mother of three.

"Finally, there is a place where we can bring the children to learn and have fun also," she added. The Science Festival will run till November 26. Timings are from 4pm–9pm on weekdays and 2pm–9pm on weekends at ADNEC and 5pm–10pm on weekdays and 2pm–10pm on weekends at the Corniche West Plaza.

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