

Young debaters

By SHAHLAA AHMED

WINNERS of a regional debating tournament that took place in Bahrain were announced yesterday.

Thirty-six teams from schools in Bahrain, Egypt, Pakistan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar took part in the British Schools in the Middle East Debating Tournament that started on Thursday.

It featured 136 debates covering a variety of cultural and political issues from anti-aging drugs to the charisma of Vladimir Putin and the European carbon trading scheme.



■ Juniors category winners and runners-up receiving their awards



The final debate on hacking took place yesterday, with

teams competing in both junior and senior categories.

St Christopher's School students Abdulla Janahi, Hussain Mattar, Feras Fayeze and Ali Al Saffar were named the overall winners of the seniors category, while the runners-up were Saad Atif Zahoor, Leena Al Bader, Hussain El-Nashar, Rishi Kumra and Joseph Collier from the British School of Kuwait (BSK).

Winners of the juniors section were Adam Wilson, Jahanvi Sreevatsan and Stuti Roy from St Christopher's School, while the runners-up were British School of Muscat students Jumaima Saif, Ezra Sitorus and Jonathan Richmond.

The teams in the final advanced through seven rounds of debate, four of which involved prepared speech and three were impromptu, with an additional round for seniors.

They later qualified from the quarter-finals and semi-finals.

GDN Editor-in-Chief George Williams presented the winners with their prizes during an awards ceremony last night.

"Debating is a great way to learn and gain confidence," said Mr Williams.

"Everyone talks about the



■ BSK student Hussain El-Nashar debating



■ St Christopher's School student Ali Al Saffar



■ BSK student Saad Atif Zahoor



■ St Christopher's student Hussain Mattar



■ BSK student Leena Al Bader debating

importance of poise, preparation and performance – but to me the prime ingredient

is passion. "All the best debates, regardless of personal opinions, will

only be exciting and convincing if fuelled by passionate belief and plenty of that was in evidence here today.

"In fact the standard of debating throughout this tournament has been phenomenal and I pay tribute to St Christopher's School for staging what has already become a prestigious multicultural event."

St Christopher's teacher David Milnes, who organised the event, described it as a success.

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■ A counselling session was held at the Asian School to teach pupils how to remain stress-free while learning. The event, called *The Meaning of Life*, was conducted by Dr Bhramara Madduri of Royal Bahrain Hospital and Rev Gaspar Fernandes of Sacred Heart Church in Umm Al Hassam. Above, students at the session.

make a mark...



■ Seniors category winners receiving their prize from Mr Williams

"They (participants) were all very well behaved and they managed to conduct themselves very well," he told the GDN.

"This kind of competition increases the students' confidence in public speaking and helps them think spontaneously."

"It also encourages team work and teaches them

research methods."

Mr Milnes said the competition also paves the way for the major World Schools Debate Championships, which take place annually.

"This time it will be held in the summer in Singapore and I think that we have enough talent in Bahrain to take part in it if we worked really hard," he said.

"It can also be an advantage being a small country as we can select the best students easily and also be able to train them well, as we haven't got millions of people to choose from."

"What we are seeking now is to be sponsored so we can hopefully represent Bahrain."

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■ Seniors runners-up with their award



■ Mr Williams and Mr Milnes, below, addressing the event



■ St Christopher's School student Abdulla Janahi taking part in the competition



■ More than 60 people took part in a walkathon organised by Joz Group to raise awareness of breast cancer. They walked 3km around Arad Bay Park and raised money for Bahrain Cancer Society. Above, some of the participants.

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