

Bahraini students excel in PIRLS



Education Minister, Dr Al Nuaimi, during the honouring ceremony held at the Education Ministry's hall in Isa Town

Manama
Bahraini students have come out with flying colours in the International Reading Literacy Study, known as (PIRLS). The students showcased their skills in science and mathematics as well as in many other areas to bag top honours in the assessment which saw the participation of over 340,000 students worldwide. "The achievements in

TIMSS 2015, especially in science and mathematics, reflect the educational strides in Bahrain," the Minister said while addressing a ceremony held to honour the students, schools, teachers and ministry's

educational specialists at the ministry's hall in Isa Town. A total of 48 Bahraini schools ranked above the global average set for PIRLS 2016, which was conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of

Educational Achievement (IEA). Students taking part in PIRLS 2016 topped all other Arab countries which took part in the international study which assesses the reading achievement of fourth graders.

Education Minister Dr Majid bin Ali Al-Nuaimi congratulated the students, teachers and parents who contributed to Bahrain's outstanding achievements in PIRLS 2016.

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At least 13 dead, 37 injured in explosion in Afghanistan

Kabul
A car packed with explosives blew up outside a sports stadium in Afghanistan's restive south yesterday, killing at least 13 people and wounding dozens more, officials said, capping a bloody week in the war-torn country. The suicide attack happened in Lashkar Gah, the capital of opium poppy-rich Helmand province, as spectators were leaving a wrestling match at the stadium, provincial governor spokesperson Omar Zwak said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, which Zwak said killed at least 13 people and wounded 45 others, including children. Helmand police spokesperson Salam Afghan had earlier given a lower toll of 10 dead and 35 wounded.

Lashkar Gah, was among the spectators leaving the stadium when the blast happened. "Four of my family members were martyred and three others were wounded," a sobbing Mohammad told AFP at the hospital run by the Italian NGO Emergency. Photos posted on Twitter purportedly of the explosion showed a huge fire and a thick plume of black smoke rising into the sky. "We heard a loud explosion from our surgical centre in the city, Emergency tweeted. "35 wounded already taken to our hospital, another 4 were dead on arrival." President Ashraf Ghani, whose government has been lambasted for its inability to protect ordinary Afghans,

condemned the attack against "innocent people", according to a statement. Helmand is largely controlled by the Taliban, which is under growing pressure to take up Ghani's offer of peace talks to end the 16-year war. So far the Taliban, Afghanistan's largest militant group, has given only a muted response. The attack caps a bloody few days in Afghanistan as Taliban and Islamic State militants ramp up attacks even before the official start of the spring fighting season. In Kabul on Wednesday a suicide bomber blew himself up among a crowd of people celebrating Nawrooz, killing dozens of people, many of them teenagers. (AFP)

Afghan officials often give conflicting figures in the wake of attacks. "The suicide bomber detonated his car bomb as spectators were leaving the stadium," Zwak said. "The bomber wanted to go inside the stadium but he was identified by the police and he detonated himself." Local officials were at the match, which witnesses said had been held as part of celebrations for Nawrooz, the Persian new year holiday that some fundamentalist Muslims consider un-Islamic. Agha Mohammad, a 25-year-old shopkeeper from



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