

## Saudi crown prince in key French visit

**PARIS:** Saudi Arabia's crown prince arrived in France yesterday on the next leg of a global tour aimed at reshaping his kingdom's austere image as he presses ahead with plans to reform the country.

Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud will hold meetings with President Emmanuel Macron during his two-day official visit starting today, his first trip to France as the heir to the Saudi throne.

Talks between Macron and the young prince will focus on cultural ties, investments and the kingdom's arch-enemy Iran.

The 32-year-old prince, widely known as MBS, was received at the Bourget airport near Paris by French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

The trip follows a coast-to-coast tour of the US as well as visits to Britain and Egypt, where the prince



■ Le Drian welcomes Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud at the Bourget airport near Paris.

courted a host of million-dollar deals. Around 18 million barrels of oil, energy, agriculture and other deals are expected to be signed at an estimated value of \$100 billion tomorrow, a source said.

# Syria 'has price to pay'

### WASHINGTON:

US President Donald Trump said yesterday there would be a "big price to pay" after medical aid groups reported dozens of people were killed by poison gas in a besieged rebel-held town in Syria.

As international officials worked to try to confirm the chemical attack which happened late on Saturday in the town of Douma, Trump took the rare step of directly criticising Russian President Vladimir Putin in connection with the incident.

The Syrian state denied government forces had launched any chemical attack. Russia, President Bashar Al Assad's most powerful ally, called the reports fake.

Trump threatened action, although it was unclear what he had in mind. Last year, he authorised a cruise missile strike on a Syrian air base days after a sarin gas attack on civilians.

"Many dead, including women and children, in mindless CHEMICAL attack in Syria. Area of atrocity is in lockdown and encircled by Syrian Army, making it completely inaccessible to outside world. President Putin, Russia and Iran are responsible for backing Animal Assad. Big price to pay," Trump wrote on Twitter.

The Russian Foreign Ministry warned against military action on the basis of "invented and fabricated excuses."

A joint statement by the medical relief organisation Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) and the civil defence service, which operates in rebel-held areas, said 49 people died



■ An image grab from a video released by a hospital showing an unidentified volunteer holding the face of a child.

in the attack. A European diplomat said Western allies would work on building a dossier based on photos, videos, witness testimony and satellite images of Syrian flights and helicopters. However gaining access to samples on the ground would be difficult.

The UN Security Council will meet twice today following rival requests by Russia and the US.

UN war crimes investigators had previously documented 33 chemical attacks in Syria, attributing 27 to the Assad government, which has repeatedly denied using the weapons.

Russia has repeatedly blocked efforts to hold Syria accountable both at the UN and OPCW.

Last week Trump said he wanted to bring home the 2,000 US troops on the ground in Syria working to help fight Islamic State militants. His advisers have urged him to wait to ensure the militants are defeated and to prevent Assad's ally Iran from gaining a foothold.

Republican US Senator John



■ The British Council Bahrain held an award ceremony for top achievers in the International English Language Testing System, or IELTS, exams. Those who scored eight and above were honoured with certificates and met the council's country director Richard Rooze along with the examination team. Above, Mr Rooze, standing, fifth from left, with the examination team and students honoured.

## Body of man missing at sea found

THE body of an Indian man who went missing at sea last week was found near the Arad coast.

Soosai Jerome, aged 28, was reportedly carrying out maintenance on a boat in Arad along with other men at around noon on Friday.

However, Mr Jerome disappeared as the men were swimming back to the shore.

"They were a short distance away from arriving back, around 30 metres away, but he lagged behind the crew," Professional Fishermen's Society vice-president Isa Hassan told the GDN.

"When they turned back to check on him, he had disappeared.

"They couldn't find him anywhere, but it was obvious he had drowned and so they reported the case immediately."

His body was recovered near the Arad coast at around 9.43am yesterday.

The Indian Embassy said it was completing the necessary paperwork to repatriate the body.

"The embassy is completing all the formalities, following which the body will be repatriated to his hometown," said a spokesman.

## Poll registration call to Brazilians

BRAZILIANS living in Bahrain have been urged to renew their registration to vote for the first round of presidential elections on October 7.

Voters must fill a form from the website of the Superior Electoral Court, print it and sign it by May 9.

Then they must go to the consular section of the Brazilian Embassy in Kuwait with all the required documents by May 16.

The application will be finalised at the embassy in Kuwait.



■ An art workshop organised by Saudi artist Abdul Adheem Al Dhahmen was held at Saar Mall for children with disabilities. The event was hosted by the mall in collaboration with the third Bahrain International Volunteer Forum and was attended by a number of disabled children. Above, Mr Al Dhahmen, second from right, with some of the children and their families and, below, with parents and mall management.



■ Bahrain Middle East Bank donated BD1,000 to the Smile Initiative. The cheque was presented by bank chief executive Korhan Alef, treasury and investment general manager Abdulla Dawood and assistant manager Samar Al Bastiki to Future Youth Society chairman Subah Al Zayani, whose organisation operates the initiative. Also present was Zubaida Noor, who is a board member and the head of the initiative's home improvement team. Above, Mr Alef, centre, presenting the donation to Mr Al Zayani, in the presence of Mr Dawood, second from right, Ms Al Bastiki, right, and Ms Noor.