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ISRAEL BOMBS IRAN EMBASSY IN SYRIA

Senior Quds Force commander among 8 killed; Tehran vows harsh response

DAMASCUS

Israeli warplanes bombed Iran's embassy in Syria yesterday in an escalation of Israel's war against Iran's regional proxies, flattening a building in a strike Tehran said killed a top Revolutionary Guards commander.

Reuters reporters at the site in the Mezzeh district of Damascus saw emergency workers clambering atop rubble of a destroyed building inside the diplomatic compound, adjacent to the main embassy building. Emergency vehicles were parked outside. An Iranian flag hung from a pole in front of the debris.

The Syrian foreign minister and interior minister were both spotted at the scene.

Israel has long targeted Iranian military installations and those of its proxies in Syria, and has ramped up those strikes in parallel with its campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Yesterday's attack was the first time the vast embassy compound itself had been hit.

Iranian state media said one of those killed was Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), and that Tehran believed he was the target of the attack.

Syria's defence ministry said

"the attack destroyed the entire building, killing and injuring everyone inside, and work is underway to recover the bodies and rescue the wounded from under the rubble."

Iran to decide on response

The Iranian ambassador to Syria, Hossein Akbari, who was not injured, said at least eight people had been killed in the attack and that Tehran's response would be "harsh".

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani says Tehran will decide on "the type of response and punishment against the aggressor."

Since Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, which precipitated the war in Gaza, Israel has escalated airstrikes in Syria against both Iran's Guards and the Tehran-backed Lebanese armed group Hezbollah.

—Agencies

In a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday, the UAE condemned the targeting of the Iranian diplomatic mission in the Syrian capital, Damascus.



Reuters

■ Emergency and security personnel search the rubble at the site of strikes which hit a building annexed to the Iranian embassy in Syria's capital Damascus, yesterday. Iran said the consular annexe was attacked by six missiles fired by F35 fighter-jets.

Abu Dhabi records best GDP growth in 10 years

Emirate's non-oil economy grew 9.1% in 2023 from a year ago

ABU DHABI
BY ABDULLA RASHEED
Abu Dhabi Editor

The benefits of diversifying are showing up as Abu Dhabi's non-oil economy grew 9.1 per cent in 2023 from a year ago, while real GDP turned in a 3.1 per cent growth.

"The emirate's GDP achieved its best performance in terms of value in 10 years at Dh1.14 trillion," says the latest update from the Statistics Center – Abu Dhabi.

This came about "despite challenges and global mar-

UAE'S GDP TO GROW BY 4.2% IN 2024

The Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) expects the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow by 4.2 per cent in 2024, rising to 5.2 per cent in 2025, while maintaining its estimate for a 3.1 per cent growth in 2023.

In its quarterly economic review report for the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2023, the Central Bank also forecasted a non-oil GDP growth of 4.7 per cent in both 2024 and 2025, and an oil GDP growth of 2.9 per cent in 2024 and 6.2 per cent in 2025.

ket fluctuations that affect all sectors and geographies in the world."

The industrial, finance and tourism sectors contributed heavily as did FDI in the private sector to 'provide new job opportunities'.

"The impressive performance of our Falcon Economy during the past few years

proved the effectiveness of Abu Dhabi's proactive approach to address the ever-changing dynamics of the global economy," said Ahmad Jasim Al Zaabi, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development.

During Q4, 2023, the economy had achieved a sterling 4.1 per cent growth

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