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TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2024

Israeli strike kills generals from Iran at Syrian site

Dispute arises on whether building was consulate; Tehran vows retribution

By Farnaz Fassihi, Ronen Bergman, and Aaron Boxerman

NEW YORK TIMES

At least three commanders and four officers overseeing Iran's covert operations in the Middle East were killed Monday when Israeli warplanes struck a building in Damascus, Syria, that is part of the Iranian Embassy complex, according to Iranian and Syrian officials.

The strike in the Syrian capital appeared to be among the deadliest attacks in a yearslong shadow war between Israel and Iran that has included the assassinations of Iranian military leaders and nuclear scientists.

That covert war has moved into the open as tensions between the countries soar over Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip against Hamas, the Iranian-backed militia that led the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

Four Israeli officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters, confirmed that Israel had been behind the strike in Damascus but denied that the building had diplomatic status.

But the Syrian ambassador to Iran, Shafiq

MIDEAST, Page A4

Candidate Biden sharpens needle to tweak Trump

Tactical shift seeks to boost base but may alienate some

By Jim Puzzanghera

GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — President Biden has opened his recent fund-raisers with a seemingly self-deprecating story, acknowledging that “everyone is not feeling the enthusiasm” about his campaign.

“The other day, a defeated guy walked up to me and said, ‘Mr. President, I’m being crushed by debt. I’m completely wiped out,’ ” Biden said at an event in Raleigh, N.C., last week. “I had to look at him and say, ‘Sorry, Donald, I can’t help you.’ ”

Laughter and applause followed, according to a transcript of the event. There’s been the same response to the joke at other fund-raisers lately. All that’s missing is the rim shot.

After starting to refer to Trump by name only last fall, Biden is now venturing into another rhetorical region he’s avoided: personal barbs about the presumptive Republican nominee.

The comments by Biden and his campaign so

BIDEN, Page A8

DeSantis removed in Vineyard case

Judge dismisses most defendants in suit over immigrants flown to island in ’22

By Mike Damiano and Nick Stoico

GLOBE STAFF

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis notched a win in court on Monday, as a federal judge in Boston significantly narrowed the scope of a high-profile lawsuit over the 2022 effort to fly about four dozen migrants

from Texas to Martha’s Vineyard.

In a 77-page decision, Judge Allison Burroughs dismissed DeSantis and other officials as defendants and allowed the suit to proceed against only one of the original nine defendants, Vertol Systems, the airplane charter company hired by Florida to fly the migrants to the is-

land community off the coast of Cape Cod.

“As we’ve always stated, the flights were conducted lawfully and authorized by the Florida Legislature. We look forward to Florida’s next illegal immigrant relocation flight, and we are glad to bring national attention to the crisis at the southern border,” a spokesperson for DeSantis, Julia Friedland, said in a statement Monday.

But advocates for the migrants

also claimed the decision as a victory, given that the suit against the charter company can move forward.

Iván Espinoza-Madrigal, the executive director of Lawyers for Civil Rights, which represents the Martha’s Vineyard migrants, said Burroughs’s decision would serve as a warning for any other private company considering working with the state of Florida to relocate migrants.

“If you are in cahoots with rogue

LAWSUIT, Page A9



ERIN CLARK/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Marie Daphney Filder held her 14-month-old son, Danilo Belex Beloge, in February while waiting to be seen by a caseworker at La Colaborativa. The Chelsea nonprofit serves hundreds of new arrivals every year with food, language classes, and legal aid.

Migrant tally soars, to unknown levels

Uncertainty about numbers is complicating state’s efforts to respond



By Samantha J. Gross

GLOBE STAFF

For nearly two consecutive years, a rising stream of migrants — many pregnant or with children by their side — have arrived in Massachusetts, fleeing violence and poverty in search of housing, food, and security. The influx has put pressure on state officials who have scrambled to support the emergency assistance shelter program, which they estimate will cost a whopping \$915

million in the next fiscal year.

As the state figures out how to cover the cost, there’s a key figure that officials don’t know for sure: How many migrants are actually arriving.

Governor Maura Healey’s administration gets its data from Massachusetts-based resettlement agencies, a network of organizations that help new arrivals with basic needs and report those eligible for federal services to the state. Through that process, the ad-

ministration has logged more than 11,000 migrants from October 2022 through September 2023, the federal fiscal year.

That represents an increase of more than 152 percent over the previous fiscal year, when the state received reports of 4,359 migrants from the agencies. But it’s still “not a comprehensive count” of the total number of new arrivals pouring into the state, said Olivia James, a spokesperson for the De-

MIGRANTS, Page A9

Blah-blah land

Tuesday: Rain starts late.

High 44-49, low 38-43.

Wednesday: Heavy, slushy rain.

High 41-46, low 33-38.

Weather and comics, **D5-6.**

Obituaries, **C11.**

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Two Florida high court rulings both backed an abortion ban after six weeks and a ballot question allowing voters to decide the overall issue. **A2.**

Historians, librarians, and computer experts worldwide reconstruct Ireland’s lost history, page by page. **A3.**

Leadership changes may be on horizon for two influential teachers unions. **B1.**

A conglomerate no more. General Electric officially splits into three companies. **D1.**

Offices? Housing? Project’s fate may foretell downtown’s future.

By Jon Chesto

GLOBE STAFF

As she tries to bring downtown Boston back to life, Mayor Michelle Wu faces two real estate crises: too much office space and not enough housing.

Now, an ambitious plan that would revive a prominent block in the heart of the central business district could end up getting caught in the middle of them.

New York-based Midwood In-

vestment & Development has been trying for several years to build a 23-story office tower at the corner of Bromfield and Washington streets. The fate of this 417,000-square-foot project could say a lot about the future of downtown, in a postpandemic era in which fewer office workers come and go five days a week and vacant storefronts abound. The powers-that-be in City Hall face a

BROMFIELD, Page A8



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

A developer seeks an office tower at Washington and Bromfield in Boston after first pitching housing there.

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