Brief Notes

IRGC Seizes Marshall Islands-Flagged Tanker in Strait of Hormuz: The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) intercepted the Marshall Islands-flagged crude oil tanker Talara today, forcing it towards Iranian territorial waters after it passed through the Strait of Hormuz. The tanker, carrying high-sulphur gasoil from Saudi Arabia's Sharjah to Singapore, veered off course near the UAE port of Khor Fakkan after small boats approached. The UK Maritime Trader Operations center (UKMTO) described the event as "likely state activity at sea." The seizure follows a pattern of IRGC harassment in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. Tehran has not officially acknowledged the seizure.

Syria Arrests Tehran-Backed Militia Leader: Syrian authorities announced on November 13 that they had arrested Abdel Ghani Qassab, who they claim is the head of an armed group linked to the Islamic Republic, along with his sons and 10 associates in Tartus. State media described Qassab as an IRGC operative who ran ideological centers and worked with regime-backed militias under the former Assad government. Qassab had been on the run since Assad's fall in December of 2024. Officials accused the group of assassinations, drug-related crimes, and youth recruiting.

IRGC Aerospace Chief Warns of 'Decisive Retaliation': IRGC Aerospace Force (IRGC-AF) chief Seyyed Majid Mousavi warned adversaries against hostile acts during a memorial ceremony in Tehran. Mousavi emphasized that the regime's defense capabilities are rooted in the legacy of these "martyrs" and pledged to continue their mission, vowing that any attack on the country would be met with "decisive retaliation."

Regime Tests Nationwide Cellular Emergency Alert System: The Islamic Republic conducted a nationwide drill of a cellular emergency alert system today, sending trial alerts to users as part of an evaluation of the network's disaster-response capabilities. The drill, supervised by Passive Defense Organization chief Gholamreza Jalali Farahani and coordinated with the state-run operator Mobile Communications of Iran (MCI, also known as Hamrah-e Aval) and the ICT Ministry, assessed how well the cell-broadcast system can deliver location-based warnings during events like earthquakes or storms. Phones received a standard text message accompanied by audio and vibration cues.

Tehran Celebrates Iraq Election as Strategic Win

Tehran is presenting Iraq's November 11 parliamentary vote as a "democratic" milestone and an affirmation of its Shia allies in the country.

President Masoud Pezeshkian called Prime Minister Mohammad Shiaa al-Sudani to congratulate him on what he described as a "successful" election reflecting the will of the Iraqi people, and praised Sudani's coalition for securing first place.

Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser of the Supreme Leader, echoed the message, calling the vote "historic and unprecedented" and a sign of Iraq's political "maturity."

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi similarly hailed Iraq's "successful management" of the peaceful vote, calling it "a significant step forward in consolidating the democratic process in Iraq." He added that Tehran is determined to further strengthen its ties to Baghdad "in all areas of mutual interest."

Across state media, the election has been cast as both a smooth democratic exercise and evidence of sustained public support for regime-aligned factions, and rejection of the United States.

On the Radar

- Tehran Friday prayer cleric Ahmad Khatami urged the Foreign Ministry to file an international complaint against U.S. President Donald Trump during his sermon today. Khatami claimed that recent comments by President Donald Trump that he was "in charge" of Israel's June strikes on nuclear facilities in Iran demand legal action rather than mere condemnation. He framed a lawsuit as "the minimum possible step" the regime should take. During the same service, Khatami framed defiance of the mandatory hijab as collaboration with Israel and the United States, urging women to align with Sharia.
- The chief of the Water Industry Federation claimed today that industry accounts for about 4% of the country's annual 93 billion cubic meters of water, while Iran's 90 million-strong population uses only around 10% for household purposes. He listed steel, paper-making, and petrochemical plants as the main industrial consumers and implied that agriculture accounts for roughly 85% of total use, though this figure has not been independently verified. His comments follow President Masoud Pezeshkian's warning that severe drought and collapsing reservoir levels could force an emergency evacuation of Tehran.
- A member of the Pezeshkian administration's Public Relations Council, Fayyaz Zahed, has presumably been forced to resign after publicly criticizing the administration for its recent appointment of Esmail Saqab Esfahani as head of the newly founded Organization for Energy Optimization and Strategic Management.

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