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Brief Notes

Tehran Says U.S. 'Copying' of Shahed Drones is an 'Admission' of Tehran's Military 'Superiority': Spokesperson and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Abolfazl Shekarchi said that the "copying" of the Shahed-136 drone by "superpowers like the United States" serves as a "practical admission" of the Islamic Republic's "stunning" military progress. He continued, "This is truly a great honor for the Iranian nation and they should be proud that a country claiming to be a superpower, which for years has sucked the blood of various nations under the title of the world's superior power, has today kneeled before a part of the power of the Islamic Republic and has resorted to copying drones manufactured by the Aerospace Forces of the IRGC to overcome its military weaknesses." Shekarchi's comments come in response to U.S. CENTCOM's announcement that it is forming a one-way attack drone squadron in the Middle East.

Russian Embassy Denies Military Recruitment Claims: The Russian embassy in Tehran denied reports, which circulated earlier today, that it is distributing fliers recruiting able-bodied Iranian men to fight in Russia's armed forces against Ukraine. The embassy's statement called the claims "fraud" perpetrated by "profiteering individuals." The embassy also urged the Iranian public to report any such fliers they may encounter to the police. This development comes against the backdrop of recent Western media reports of a concerted Russian effort to recruit volunteers in Africa, Central Asia, and the Far East.

Fear of Capital Flight Prompts Crackdown on Gold, Crypto

Islamic Republic authorities moved to ban the use of cryptocurrencies and gold as alternatives to the national currency, coinciding with the rial's new phase of sharp depreciation beginning in late November. Central bank officials framed the restrictions as necessary to maintain the "governance and sovereignty of the national currency," while critics argue it is actually an effort to control the impact of eroding public confidence in the rial.

Analysts warn that efforts to fence off alternatives may backfire by accelerating capital flight into informal channels. With inflation fears compounded by impending fuel price hikes, economists caution that sustained devaluation could push the economy toward broader instability.

Trilateral Talks Highlight China's Growing Role in the Region

Tehran, Beijing, and Riyadh held their third trilateral meeting in Tehran today, during which Tehran and Riyadh reaffirmed their commitments to the Beijing-brokered rapprochement between the two, and outlined potential areas of regional cooperation. According to Saudi-funded Asharq al-Awsat newspaper, the deputy foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic, Walid Al-Khuraiji and Majid Takht-Ravanchi respectively, underlined their commitment to "strengthening good neighbourly relations." A joint statement from the three countries touted progress on consular services between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic, urged a "comprehensive political solution" in Yemen, and welcomed China's continued role in supporting Tehran–Riyadh ties. The three countries also called for an immediate end to "Israel's aggression against Palestine, Lebanon and Syria."

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Miao Deyu also met with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who praised China's role in "strengthening international peace and stability and helping to safeguard multilateralism and the rule of law." Araghchi said Tehran was determined to deepen ties with Beijing under their 25-year strategic partnership. The discussions also covered the nuclear file and coordination in multilateral forums, such as SCO and BRICS, underscoring China's expanding diplomatic footprint in the region.

On the Radar

- Minsk and Tehran held parallel economic and military cooperation meetings yesterday. In Tehran, the sides discussed expanding trade and investment cooperation, while in Minsk they agreed on a 2026 plan for joint military activities. Officials highlighted progress in air force, air defense, and special forces cooperation.

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