Brief Notes

Taliban Visits Tehran, Deputy FM Visits Kabul: Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi arrived in Kabul yesterday to discuss water management, border issues, and judicial cooperation with Taliban officials. Tehran's embassy in Kabul stated that the visit is in line with the regime's "neighborhood policy" to strengthen bilateral ties with neighboring countries. Meanwhile, a delegation from the Taliban Interior Ministry traveled to Tehran to attend the fourth interior ministers' meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Taliban spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qani stated that the visit aims to "enhance regional cooperation and strengthen bilateral ties" among ECO member states. The Taliban delegation departed Kabul yesterday.

Clashes With 'Separatists' Continue: A provincial judiciary official in Iran's Khuzestan Province said a fugitive with "separatist and Takfiri affiliations" died while trying to escape arrest. The "fugitive" reportedly opened fire on security forces before drowning in the Karun River while attempting to flee. The incident occurred near Ahvaz, which is home to a large Arabic-speaking population. Meanwhile, an anti-narcotics officer was reportedly killed and another was wounded in a shootout with gunmen in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan Province.

Mossad Names IRGC Officer Behind International Attacks: On Sunday, Israel's Mossad named senior IRGC officer Sardar Ammar as being behind several attacks attempted on Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide in 2024 and 2025. In a statement released via the Israeli Prime Minister's Office on behalf of the Mossad, the agency said it was "exposing for the first time" a network led by Sardar Ammar, operating under Quds Force Commander Esmail Qaani, which has directed terrorist plots in Australia, Greece, and Germany.

Regime Infighting on the Rise

Factional in-fighting seems to be on the rise within the ruling establishment. Majles (Parliament) Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, addressing the legislative body, accused former President Hassan Rouhani (2013–2021) and his then Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of "undermining" the Islamic Republic's strategic ties with Moscow.

The jab follows a recent row sparked by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's claim that Zarif was responsible for the inclusion of the snapback mechanism in the 2015 nuclear deal.

Zarif denied the allegation, while Rouhani, seen as eyeing the Supreme Leader position, defended his record by rejecting what he called the "false dichotomy of war or surrender."

Meanwhile, Amir Hossein Sabeti, a parliamentarian representing Tehran, called Rouhani "the most hated politician in Iran" and urged the judiciary to prosecute him, while another member, Hamid Rasai, said, "Rouhani is trying to divert public attention by insulting the parliament." Some lawmakers also chanted "Death to Fereydoun" (Rouhani's last name before he changed it) and demanded his trial. In response, Rouhani supporters pushed back. Journalist Ahmad Zeydabadi warned that "silencing critics at Moscow's request would signal a colonial relationship." The outlet Asr-e Iran similarly urged Ghalibaf to "leave foreign policy to the Foreign Ministry.

Elsewhere, a senior Ministry of Intelligence officer and Rouhani ally, Hessamodin Ashena, threatened to "Open the Pandora's box" if anyone reveals confidential information regarding Rouhani's background. The threat came in reaction to criticism directed at Rouhani by former IRGC chief Mohammad Ali Jafari.

China Will Take 'Necessary Steps to Safeguard' Interests in Iran

Beijing's ambassador to Tehran, Cong Peiwu, voiced strong opposition to Western efforts to reinstate UN sanctions on the Islamic Republic, denouncing what he described as the "remote management policy."

During a press conference at the Chinese embassy in Tehran today, Cong said: "China opposes unilateral sanctions and considers the 'remote management' policy—namely, the attempt to obstruct normal cooperation between other countries and Iran within the framework of international law—to be both illogical and unlawful.... If the legitimate interests of Chinese companies and projects are harmed, China will take the necessary steps to safeguard those interests." Cong continued that "diplomacy remains the only solution to the nuclear dispute" and blamed Western powers for causing a "serious delay" in reaching an agreement.

In a separate meeting today with Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior adviser to the Supreme Leader, Cong stressed the "special importance" of relations between China and the Islamic Republic and expressed gratitude to the Supreme Leader for supporting stronger ties.

Velayati stated that "there are three independent powers in Asia—Iran, China, and Russia—that will play an influential role in shaping a new world order," and thanked China for its "principled stance" against snapback sanctions, calling it a reflection of the "deep friendly cooperation and mutual trust between the two countries."

On the Radar

- IRGC Commander-in-Chief Mohammad Pakpour has reportedly appointed Hojjatollah Qureshi as the new coordination deputy of the IRGC, replacing Mohammad Reza Naqdi. The change was confirmed by the IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency. It remains unclear what position Naqdi will assume following his removal.

- Islamabad and Tehran have agreed to form a joint committee to address cross-border trade issues, focusing on easing the entry of Iranian commercial trucks into Pakistan. The decision came after talks in Islamabad between Roads and Urban Development Minister Farzaneh Sadeq and her Pakistani counterpart Abdul Aleem Khan. Both sides discussed boosting regional connectivity, with Islamabad offering Tehran trade access to China through its transit routes. Officials also agreed to review the Islamabad–Tehran–Istanbul rail project in December.
- Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani met with Omani Interior Minister Hamoud bin Faisal al-Busaidi in Tehran. Larijani praised Oman's "constructive and balanced" regional role and called for stronger strategic cooperation between the two nations. Al-Busaidi described the visit as a move to "deepen strategic relations" and invited Larijani to Muscat. Oman has served as a key mediator between the Islamic Republic and the United States in recent years.

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