Brief Notes

State Media Cast Epstein Vote as 'Political Defeat' for Trump: State media claimed the 427-1 U.S. House of Representatives vote directing the Department of Justice to release files related to Jeffrey Epstein was a "heavy political defeat" for President Trump, dubiously suggesting it showed a sudden collapse of Republic Party discipline. Other regime outlets additionally portrayed the near-unanimous vote to release Epstein-related files as evidence of deep corruption in Washington, calling Epstein a conduit for "illegal and inhumane sexual relations" among U.S. elites and warning the case could "shake the political structure of America." Coverage described the vote as a moment where "scandal looms over the White House" and argued that Trump's political authority "is visibly wounded."

Iranian-American Dual National Detained in Iran: Iranian-American Afarin Mohajer was detained at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport on September 29 after traveling to Iran for a personal visit. Her son, Reza Zarabi, who is a political activist based outside of Iran, said that she informed him over the phone that she is now in Evin Prison's Ward 209. Her charges include "insulting the Supreme Leader," "spreading propaganda against the regime," "creation of a hostile group," and "membership of a hostile group." Zarabi insisted his mother takes part in "no political activity" and was arrested "because of [his] political activities."

President Says Capital Must Be Moved Amid Water Crisis: Islamic Republic President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that Tehran's future is untenable, saying the capital "must be relocated" as the mismanagement-induced water crisis pushes the city towards "a dark future." In remarks to academics in Qazvin, he said the government "no longer has a choice," stressing that Tehran "cannot continue adding population and construction," because the regime "cannot solve the water problem." Pezeshkian dismissed proposals to pipe water in from the Persian Gulf as expensive, noting that "each cubic meter would cost around 500,000 tomans," and urged a "new scientific and comprehensive roadmap." His comments come amid severe nationwide water shortages and renewed internal debate over potentially shifting the nation's capital to the southern coast.

Tehran Condemns Netanyahu's Southern Syria Troop Visit: Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei denounced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's November 19 visit to Israeli troops in southern Syria, calling it an "illegal…criminal entry" that fits Israel's supposed pattern of "repeated aerial and land aggression" and its "occupation of a major part of southern Syria." He said the "provocative act" was meant to reinforce and expand Israel's hold over the Golan Heights and southern Syria, and urged the UN Security Council to pressure Israel to withdraw from the area.

IRGC Quds Force Personnel Killed in Training Accident: Two members of the IRGC Quds Force died during a training exercise near Tehran. According to a statement from the extraterritorial Quds Force, the two personnel were leading weapons training for younger soldiers when the incident occurred.

Oil Ministry Dismisses Fuel Price Hike Rumors: The Islamic Republic's Oil Ministry rejected reports of an imminent fuel price increase as "baseless" and warned of legal action against those spreading "false news." Officials said fuel quotas and subsidized prices remain unchanged, despite Tehran spending $6 billion on imports this year as consumption exceeds domestic production. A spokesperson for the Pezeshkian administration stressed that any price reform would be gradual to avoid unrest similar to 2019 protests and highlighted measures to curb fuel smuggling.

Tehran Terminates Cairo Agreement Following IAEA Resolution

The IAEA Board of Governors has passed a U.S.- and European-backed resolution demanding that Tehran immediately grant inspectors access to nuclear sites bombed during the 12-Day War and provide "precise" updates on its stockpile of enriched uranium. 19 board members supported the measure, which also instructs IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi to report on reimposed UN sanctions triggered by the snapback mechanism. The Agency has been unable to verify the status or location of the Islamic Republic's enriched uranium since June, raising concerns about material that Grossi has warned could, in theory, permit the production of multiple nuclear weapons.

Tehran condemned the resolution as an attempt to "exert undue pressure," with the Islamic Republic's UN ambassador Reza Najafi accusing Western nations of pushing a "false and misleading" narrative.

In response to the adoption of the resolution, Islamic Republic Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced that Tehran has officially terminated the Cairo agreement with the IAEA. Araghchi said Tehran sent a formal letter to Grossi declaring the September cooperation deal invalid, describing the resolution as an "illegal and unjustified action" adopted "under pressure." Araghchi said that the move formally acknowledges that the Cairo understanding "is no longer valid and is considered terminated," following earlier statements by Tehran that the agreement could not stand after the E3 and U.S. triggered the snapback mechanism.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei, during an interview on state TV today, announced that further retaliatory steps will follow.

On the Radar

- Authorities say they have dismantled a weapons smuggling network in Raber, Kerman Province, seizing 18 sidearms, 31 magazines, and ammunition from a sedan, and arresting two suspects. Police say they have launched a wider investigation to identify and detain additional members of the network.

- Taliban Commerce Minister Nooruddin Azizi met with the provincial governor of Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan Province on November 15 to boost trade and transit, including easing border congestion and improving access to Chabahar Port. The visit focused on attracting joint investment and expanding port and road capacity, with short-term targets of 1,000 trucks crossing daily. Azizi later traveled to India to discuss Chabahar Port's use, Indian investment, and bilateral trade. The visit follows Pakistan's closure of key crossings, prompting the Taliban to increasingly rely on Iranian ports for trade.
- Araghchi spoke by phone with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov today, with the Russian Foreign Ministry saying "regional security issues were the main subject of the conversation," without giving further details.

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