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Brief Notes

Unclaimed Drone Strikes on Iraqi Kurdistan Oil Fields: Nearly 20 drone strikes have targeted oil fields in Iraqi Kurdistan since July 14. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, although London-based Al-Arab newspaper reported that "the attacks are widely believed to have been carried out by factions linked to Iraq's ruling Shia-led Coordination Framework, a coalition representing blocs opposed to the Sadrist movement and aligned with Tehran-backed militias." Both the Framework and the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Commission, the umbrella organization of Shia militias, have issued statements denying any involvement and condemning the attacks.

Mysterious Explosions, Fires Continue Across Iran: The surge in reported explosions and fires that has occurred in Iran since the end of the 12-Day War has continued. Today, a large fire erupted at the Venus Shopping Center in Bandar Anzali, Gilan Province. Videos on social media show the fire, which reportedly began in a commercial unit on the mall's second floor. While authorities routinely attribute the blasts to gas leaks or electrical malfunctions, many citizens have voiced skepticism.

Another Threat to President Trump's Life: Mohammad Javad Larijani, a former top advisor to the Supreme Leader, today warned that U.S. President Donald Trump's perceived threat against the Supreme Leader may spark attempts at retaliation against him from Muslims throughout the world: "You threatened our leader, and now hundreds of millions of Muslims may be after Trump's head." He added, "This issue is out of our hands. It is a fatwa."

Heatwave, Water Shortage Bring Life to a Halt in Iran

The Islamic Republic announced Wednesday, July 23, a public holiday in 18 provinces and reduced working hours elsewhere due to extreme heat as well as ongoing power and water shortages. Government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani said the day off should be considered as "an opportunity for rest, a short trip, or being with family."

Tehran is facing frequent water cuts and severe pressure drops, with southern neighborhoods disproportionately affected. While officials continue to deny any widespread disruption, local reports indicate that unannounced outages are occurring regularly. The growing crisis has sparked concerns that, like electricity, water may soon be subject to scheduled cuts.

Footage shows protests taking place in Sabzevar, Razavi Khorasan Province, due to water and electricity shortages.

FM Araghchi: Nuclear Facilities 'Seriously Damaged'

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Fox News yesterday that the Islamic Republic had temporarily stopped uranium enrichment as nuclear facilities since they were "seriously damaged" by U.S. strikes, but insisted Tehran would not abandon uranium enrichment, calling it "a question of national pride."

Araghchi further said that Tehran is "open to talks," although "not direct for the time being," if the U.S. comes to the table looking for a "win-win solution."

Denying that the Islamic Republic has designated U.S. officials, including President Trump, for assassination, Araghchi said, "We have never said that. Maybe some individuals here or there have said things like that, but that has never been Iran's official position." Learn more about the Islamic Republic's recent death threats to President Trump by reading NUFDI's breakdown here.

President Trump, pointing to Araghchi's statement that nuclear facilities were "seriously damaged" as proof of the U.S. strikes' success, wrote on Truth Social: "...Abbas Araghchi, on the Iran Nuclear Sites: 'Damages are very severe, they are destroyed.' Of course they are, just like I said, and we will do it again, if necessary....Fake News CNN should immediately fire their phony 'reporter' and apologize to me and the great pilots who 'OBLITERATED' Iran's nuclear sites..."

IRGC Warns Against Enemy Recruitment Tactics

The IRGC Intelligence Organization has issued a mass text message warning Iranian citizens against alleged "propaganda efforts" by foreign intelligence agencies via mobile apps, urging public vigilance and rejection of such messages.

The statement read: "Fellow citizens, given the increased efforts by enemy spy services through widespread propaganda on mobile applications—including calls for collaboration and betrayal of the country—it is essential to reject such propaganda and remain alert. We urge you to inform those around you about these enemy tactics."

Separately today, the Pezeshkian administration submitted a bill to parliament to combat "false news and rumors" online, according to the IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency.

In North Khorasan Province, two individuals were detained today over alleged ties to Israel, and cases were opened against 15 others for "spreading false news and anti-regime propaganda." Additionally, one individual was arrested in Azna, Lorestan Province, for allegedly disturbing public opinion online.

Tehran and Moscow Meet as Snapback Threat Looms

Officials from Russia, China, and the Islamic Republic met in Tehran today to coordinate a diplomatic and legal response to the E3's potential move to trigger snapback sanctions.

Analysts cited by Russian business outlet Vedomosti called the E3's potential move to trigger the snapback mechanism "a legal abuse" and warned that another round of Israeli strikes on the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities could come as early as this autumn if no diplomatic solution is reached.

Yesterday, Islamic Republic Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh met his Russian counterpart Andrei Belousov in Moscow to discuss expanding military cooperation. Nasirzadeh also joined a prior meeting between Ali Larijani, acting as President Pezeshkian's envoy, and President Putin.

On the Radar

- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, in a call with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan, urged immediate action against Israeli "crimes" in Gaza and Syria, calling for an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Both condemned Israel's actions, while the upcoming E3–Islamic Republic nuclear talks in Istanbul were not mentioned in the Foreign Ministry readout of the call.
- The U.S. Treasury today sanctioned two individuals and five entities, located across Yemen and the UAE, linked to the importing of petroleum products from the Islamic Republic in Iran to the Tehran-backed Houthis, who gain hundreds of millions of dollars annually by working with Yemeni businessmen to tax petroleum imports.
- Israeli Defense Force Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, said, "Iran and its axis remain in our sights—the campaign against Iran isn't over," adding that 2026 would be a year focused on preparedness, restoring capabilities, and seizing operational opportunities.
- Truck drivers in Tehran and Kerman Province held protests over economic grievances.
- Security forces arrested three citizens in Saqqez for holding protests calling for environmental protections against mining.
- Officials filed a new case against jailed activist Mehdi Mahmoudian, already serving an eight-month sentence for criticizing regime narratives regarding prison conditions.
- Yesterday, a court session was held for imprisoned students Ali Younesi and Amirhossein Moradi. Authorities barred Younesi from attending the hearing. His family has had no news of him in 21 days, except for a brief call. Both students were sentenced to six years and eight months imprisonment in 2020, accused of ties to opposition groups, which the family denies.
- The hacktivist group Edalat-e Ali claims that following a June 17 cyberattack on Bank Sepah, all data, including loan and deposit records, was permanently deleted, leaving the bank without any transaction history or recovery options.

- Judiciary spokesperson Asghar Jahangir confirmed that 27 of 75 prisoners remain unaccounted for following the June 23 Israeli strike on the facility. Jahangir stated that none of the escapees are serious offenders and, requesting they turn themselves in, said that those who fled amid the chaos would not be punished, as their actions were driven by fear for their lives.
- Today, Pezeshkian administration spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani announced that 1,062 people were killed during the 12-Day War, including 276 civilians, among them 102 women, 38 children, five aid workers, and 18 healthcare staff. Mohajerani also reported extensive infrastructure damage, including 36 schools in 16 provinces, 219 industrial sites, 22 homes of scientists, seven hospitals, and 11 ambulances.
- The IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency reported that a border guard was killed yesterday during clashes with a "hostile and counter-revolutionary group" near the western border in Kurdistan Province. The provincial border guard commander said Islamic Republic forces "prevented the group from entering Iranian soil" and that "special intelligence operatives are continuing to arrest them."
- Pakistani media reports that President Masoud Pezeshkian will visit Pakistan on July 26.
- Speaking at a UN Security Council meeting in New York, Islamic Republic Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi condemned the U.S. and Israel for strikes on Iranian territory and labeled them "nuclear-armed aggressors." He accused Israel of decades of "terrorism" and warned that silence from the UN and IAEA sends a dangerous message to NPT members.

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