Brief Notes

Russian FM Calls for 'Impartial' IAEA Oversight of Tehran's Nuclear Program: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called on the IAEA to remain "impartial" regarding the regime's nuclear program. Speaking in Cairo today, Lavrov said, "We call on Secretary General [Rafael] Grossi, who calls for a resumption of contacts with Tehran, to strictly abide by the principles of operation of the IAEA secretariat, including [through] a neutral, impartial nature of assessments and the operation of the organization as a whole." His remarks came after talks with his Egyptian counterpart earlier today.

At Least Seven Dead in Severe Flooding: The Iranian Red Crescent has said at least seven people have died following severe flooding in the south of the country, as rescue operations continue amid extreme weather warnings. The organization also confirmed in its latest update that more than 23,000 people have been affected by snowstorms, blizzards, and floods in recent days, with southern provinces bearing the brunt of the damage. Authorities have extended a red weather alert for the south of the country, warning of further downpours and flooding.

State Media Responds to Perez-Shakdam Interview

An interview with French-Jewish journalist Catherine Perez-Shakdam on Iran International has drawn sharp reactions from other dissident and pro-establishment circles. She claimed deep access to the regime's leadership, including meetings with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and senior IRGC commanders, and alleged Khamenei justified killing dissidents. Perez-Shakdam also called on Iranians to support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi.

IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency dismissed her claims as "ridiculous" and framed the interview as an Israeli media operation, likening it to a "Mossad interrogation." Online, accounts highlighted her endorsement of the Crown Prince, while pro-establishment users rejected her story as exaggerated.

Perez-Shakdam has long been controversial, with prior allegations of "inappropriate" access to senior officials, which she has denied, fueling debate over her credibility and potential shortcoming of the Islamic Republic's security forces.

On the Radar

- Tehran Friday Prayer Imam Mohammad Hassan Abutorabifard described the Islamic Republic's banking system as "corrupt" in his sermon today, calling for urgent reforms to preserve the value of the rial as the currency enters a fresh phase of devaluation. Abutorabifard said the Central Bank lacks proper oversight authority and urged President Masoud Pezeshkian to empower it to defend the currency. While blaming inflation and economic distress on "global arrogance" and prolonged external pressure, he acknowledged that domestic structural failures are a central problem. Abutorabifard also called on officials to be honest with the public about how the economic system can be reformed, briefly reiterating support for the Houthis, Hezbollah, and Hamas.
- The Islamic Republic condemned the U.S. for sanctioning two International Criminal Court (ICC) judges, describing the move as "impunity in its most blatant and brutal form." Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei said the sanctions target judges seeking to hold Israel accountable for the war in Gaza, while "genocidal war criminals remain at large." The U.S. sanctioned Gocha Lordkipanidze of Georgia and Erdenebalsuren Damdin of Mongolia yesterday, prompting the ICC to call the move a "flagrant attack" on the court's independence.

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