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Brief Notes

IRGC Navy Conducts Long-Range Ballistic Missile Tests Amid Persian Gulf Island Tensions: In the second day of the IRGC Navy's Persian Gulf exercise, extensive naval and missile drills were conducted, launching Qadr-110, Qadr-380, and "303" type ballistic missiles at practice targets in the Sea of Oman, alongside "simultaneous" drone strikes on mock enemy bases. According to IRGC-affiliated outlets, air defense systems were also tested "against air targets that intend to attack fast vessels and the Iranian coast." Earlier this week, the IRGC Ground Force hosted a joint SCO counter-terrorism exercise, Sahand-2025, in Iran's East Azerbaijan Province.

Oil Minister Says 'Rapid-Action Plan' Will Boost Oil Production: Islamic Republic Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad said the "rapid-action plan" to increase oil production through National Development Fund investments is progressing on schedule. He added, "This rapid-action plan concerns an extra 250,000 barrels-per-day in production, funded by $3 billion."

Authorities Open Hijab Case Against Kish Island Marathon Organizers: Authorities have launched a legal case against organizers of a marathon on Kish Island, citing participants' violations of "public chastity" laws due to their running without hijabs. The Revolutionary Prosecutor of Kish said, "Despite previous warnings that the current laws and regulations of the country, as well as religious, customary and professional principles in holding this competition, the relevant authorities did not pay attention to these warnings, and the manner of holding the event has been such that it has damaged public chastity." The event reportedly drew 5,200 participants despite prior warnings from the state-controlled Athletics Federation that the race was "illegal" and that "consequences would fall on the organizers." This development comes amid recent directives instructing all branches of the regime to crackdown on hijab violations.

Friday Prayer Imam: Trump Will Take 'Dream' of Negotiating with Tehran 'to the Grave'

Tehran Friday Prayer Imam Ahmad Khatami used his nationally-broadcast sermon today to dismiss "rumors" regarding backchannel communication between Tehran and Washington. Khatami denied that Tehran had sent a letter to the U.S. via a "third country," calling the claim an "absolute lie" promoted by "America and America-lovers."

His remarks follow the regime's indictment of former MP Mostafa Kavakebian, who alleged that President Masoud Pezeshkian's recent letter to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman included a message to U.S. President Donald Trump.

Khatami warned that the "arrogant and delusional" Trump would, like U.S. leadership "starting from Carter until today," take the "dream" of negotiating with the Islamic Republic "to the grave."

Khatami also reiterated the Supreme Leader's December 3 remarks to a group of women that mandatory hijab is not an obstacle to women's progress.

Judiciary Denies Reported Reason for Controversial Prison Sentence

Earlier this week, the Judiciary sentenced Sajjad Fathi, a 39-year-old Iranian man, to five years in prison on alleged "national security charges."

At the time of the sentencing, several human rights organizations reported that the sentence was due to Fathi's filming of the damage to his own home during the 12-Day War.

Today, the Judiciary-run outlet Mizan issued a rebuttal to rights groups' reporting on the case, insisting that Fathi's home "was not damaged" during the 12-Day War and that he was instead filming air defense activity, missile strikes, and military fortifications "on assignment" from "hostile networks," including BBC Persian and Iran International.

On the Radar

- The Foreign Ministry marked the UN's International Day Against Unilateral Coercive Measures by denouncing U.S. sanctions. Spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei claimed Western sanctions violate Iran's "core human rights." He accused Washington of committing "crimes against humanity" due to sanctions' impact on civilians in Iran.
- Hormozgan Province Law Enforcement Command dismantled a shell company allegedly behind the illicit export of 40 million liters (~10.5m gallons) of subsidized oil products. Provincial police stated, "The CEO and main suspect in this case was identified, arrested in a police operation, and transferred to Bandar Abbas in compliance with all legal formalities. During technical interrogations, he openly confessed to smuggling and exporting 40 million liters of subsidized petroleum products under the guise and use of documents from 58 shell companies." Economic experts estimated the smuggled fuel's value at 20 trillion rials ($16.76 million).

- As reported on December 2, at least ten Afghan migrants were reportedly shot dead by Islamic Republic border forces while attempting to cross illegally into Iran, though reports now differ on when the incident occurred. Relatives told local media that the bodies had been left at the site for nearly twenty days. The Taliban said it would "thoroughly examine" the case and has returned the bodies to families.
- Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi today invited his Lebanese counterpart, Youssef Raji, to talks in Tehran following Raji's public criticism of Islamic Republic support for Hezbollah. Araghchi asserted that Tehran fully supports Lebanon's sovereignty and rejected the need for a third-party mediator between the two countries. He also signaled willingness to visit Beirut "should he receive an official invitation."

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