Brief Notes

FM Says Military Strength Regained Following 12-Day War, 'Enemy' Seeking to Sow Division: Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi today said, "The Armed Forces have employed all their capabilities for this, and our missile firepower is now significantly stronger than it was during the 12-Day War.... According to intelligence received, the enemy is seeking to create division and unrest. However, the president's priority is to preserve national unity and cohesion." These comments, made while speaking in Hamadan Province, come after weeks of intensified factional infighting among the regime's ruling elite.

100 Semi-Auto Rifles Seized Near Turkish Border: Nasser Atabati, head of the Western Azerbaijan Province judiciary, announced that authorities seized a shipment of 100 semi-automatic rifles near the Bazargan border with Turkey. Atabati said the operation occurred "following coordination between the prosecutor and the intelligence bureau of Maku County, and in accordance with directives aimed at restricting the entry channels for arms and ammunition under current intelligence supervision." Atebati added, "This consignment of weapons, which had been brought into Bazargan by an Iranian company from Turkey, was being transported to Tehran."

Second Fuel Smuggling Ship Seized in Less Than a Week: Regime border guards seized a vessel allegedly carrying over 960,000 liters (~250,000 gallons) of smuggled diesel in the Persian Gulf, arresting 19 people. Border Guard Command chief Ahmad Ali Goudarzi said the fuel, worth about 355 billion rials (roughly $300,000), was destined for "foreign ships." This is the second vessel seized in the Persian Gulf for fuel smuggling in the last week.

Islamic Republic to Launch Hebrew-Language TV Channel: The state broadcaster has been ordered to launch an international television channel in Hebrew following a directive from the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (SCCR), which President Masoud Pezeshkian has approved. The move aims to counter what Tehran calls "Zionist media propaganda." The SCCR said the new Hebrew-language network would serve as a tool of "media diplomacy" to project the Islamic Republic's stance to global audiences. Tehran launched a Hebrew radio channel in 2002 dubbed "Voice of David." Major media and security players like Nour News regularly publish content in Hebrew, often produced with AI-generated translations.

Tehran's Hostage Diplomacy Strikes Again

French President Emmanuel Macron announced on X yesterday that Cecile Kohler, 41, and Jacques Paris, 72, two French nationals held in the notorious Evin Prison since May 2022, were released and on their way to the Embassy of France in Tehran.

Foreign Minister Araghchi today confirmed that the two French nationals "convicted of espionage" had been "granted Islamic clemency." Aragchi also confirmed that Mahdiyeh Esfandiari, an Iranian national imprisoned in France on charges of praising terrorist acts, was "released and is now in our embassy."

President Masoud Pezeshkian told French President Macron in a phone call today that the U.S. and Europe must take "trust-building" steps by recognizing Tehran's rights, saying, "It is not Iran that must prove its honesty and build trust. It is America and Europe that must demonstrate their sincerity and earn the trust of the Islamic Republic." According to the Office of the President's readout of the call, Macron expressed readiness to establish a new negotiation framework to lift sanctions.

Le Monde yesterday reported that France has been engaging in under-the-table hostage diplomacy negotiations with the Islamic Republic since September. Despite the news of their release, the pair's lawyer, Shirin Ardekani, said, "They are not free. They will only be free when they can embrace their relatives." Kohler's mother echoed, "Until I hold her in my arms, this freedom does not feel real."

State Media Praises NYC Election of Mamdani

State media, including the official IRNA, have praised Zohran Mamdani's election as the next mayor of New York City. State-run outlets characterized Mamdani as an "anti-Zionist," claiming that "Zionists are afraid" of his victory. These outlets also repeatedly mentioned Mamdani's Shia religion and his describing himself as U.S. President Donald Trump's "worst nightmare." Additionally, MP Abolqasem Jarareh said that Mamdani's win was "a sign of the strength of the slogan 'Death to Israel.'"

Daily newspapers further framed Mamdani's win within the context of opposition to Trump, with "hardline" Vatan-e Emrouz running the headline "New York Against Washington." Additionally, "reformist" papers depicted Mamdani as "an enemy" of Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and "the rich."

On the Radar

- Foreign Minister Araghchi criticized Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Corina Machado for her phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accusing her of supporting "genocide and war crimes in Palestine." In a post on X, Araghchi stated that the Nobel Prize has long been utilized as a Western political tool against non-Western governments, and as a result, lost

its credibility. Machado has supported Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi as an alternative to the Islamic Republic and repeatedly condemned the regime's support for Maduro. Tehran had earlier denounced her Nobel win as a "mockery of peace."

- Foreign Minister Araghchi praised China for calling the E3's activation of the UNSCR 2231 snapback mechanism "illegal" at the UN Security Council. In a phone call with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Araghchi said, "The constructive cooperation between China, Iran and Russia in countering the unilateralism of America and certain Western countries at the UN was highly significant and received support from 121 member states of the Non-Aligned Movement." Wang said he appreciated the "peaceful nature" of Tehran's nuclear program and reiterated the regime's nuclear rights as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

- Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take a stronger stance on holding Israel accountable for its "aggression," during talks with his Saudi counterpart in Jeddah ahead of the OIC's November 9 meeting. Gharibabadi called for greater cooperation among member states and highlighted growing Tehran–Riyadh engagement in regional and international organizations. Gharibabadi said he hoped the "growing trend" in relations would continue "with greater speed and quality," even as Saudi media reflects mixed views on Tehran.

- Pakistan and the Islamic Republic signed several agreements yesterday to enhance cooperation in the media and cultural sectors, including deals between the state broadcaster IRIB and Pakistan's PTV, and private media firms for joint productions, content exchange, and regulatory collaboration. Officials from both sides said the pacts aim to deepen public diplomacy and promote the shared values of "peace and resistance to oppression." Today, Majles (Parliament) Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf departed for Pakistan, saying his visit would focus on boosting economic and parliamentary ties, developing border markets amid sanctions, and thanking Islamabad for its support during the 12-Day War.

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