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Brief Notes

IRGC Tests 'New Satellite Technology': The IRGC conducted a suborbital test launch of the Qassed satellite launch vehicle (SLV) this morning. IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency reported that "new technologies" were used in the launch. The Qased SLV is operated by the IRGC Aerospace Force, not the Iranian Space Agency (ISA), and was used in 2023 to launch the IRGC's Najm intelligence satellite.

Another Indiscriminate State Shooting: On Saturday, indiscriminate gunfire from Islamic Republic security forces left one killed and one injured in Rask, Sistan-Baluchestan Province. On Thursday, in Khomeyn, Markazi Province, regime forces also killed four citizens, including a 3-year-old child, in another shooting.

Security Official Denies 12-Day War Details: An Islamic Republic security official has dismissed reports regarding the details of Islamic Republic commanders' assassinations during the 12-Day War as "fake, misleading, and even cartoonish." Speaking to IRGC-linked Fars News Agency yesterday, the unnamed official called the narratives "delusional scenarios" spread by the enemy to undermine national unity after the war. The official also rejected claims that the former, now deceased, commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force's location was exposed by a spy linked to Israel.

Increasing Number of Explosions Across Iran: Another explosion, this time in a building in Rasht, Gilan Province, injured 18 people yesterday. Reports of explosions and fires across Iran have surged since the 12-Day War, though the regime has attributed most of these incidents to gas leaks.

Tehran to Negotiate With E3, Not U.S.

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said in a press conference today, "At this stage, we have no intention of speaking with the United States."

Meanwhile, the IRGC-affiliated Tasnim News Agency, citing an "informed source," confirmed that the Islamic Republic and the E3 (France, Germany, and the UK) have agreed to hold negotiations.

The parties will reportedly hold their next round of nuclear talks in Geneva on Friday, July 25.

The E3 have warned of renewed sanctions if the Islamic Republic does not resume nuclear negotiations. The upcoming discussions will likely focus on immediate measures that can be taken by the Islamic Republic to delay, or temporarily neutralize, the E3's snapback threat.

Additionally, the Islamic Republic, Russia, and China will hold a trilateral meeting tomorrow in Tehran to discuss the same topics, according to Baghaei.

Baghaei further accused the E3 of failing to adequately uphold their obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, saying, "The European parties have been at fault and negligent in implementing [the agreement]."

Earlier today, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Fox News, "Obviously, we cannot give up our enrichment. It is an achievement of our scientists and, more than that, a matter of national pride. Our enrichment is very dear to us."

In a separate meeting, questioning the intentions of other countries, Araghchi added, "Had we not negotiated with [the U.S.], would they have refrained from attacking? They had plans to attack anyway, but negotiation gave us legitimacy."

Worsening Water Crisis

The Islamic Republic's poor planning, including nonsensical resource distribution, unchecked extraction, and ecologically harmful projects, such as inter-basin transfers and unsustainable dam building, has depleted water reserves nationwide.

Due to these factors, Iran is now facing its worst water scarcity in a century, with experts warning of potential impending "hydrological bankruptcy."

Agriculture, consuming over 90% of the country's water, remains highly inefficient, while governance is fragmented across uncoordinated agencies.

Tehran's freshwater reservoirs are now less than half full, with shortages prompting rationing and public outrage.

Islamic Republic Officials have acknowledged the urgent need to rectify the situation, but experts warn that without deep, systemic change and political will, Iran risks eventual crisis-level water scarcity.

Regime Air Defenses Revived Following 12-Day War

Deputy Operations Chief of the Artesh (the conventional/"regular" armed forces, as opposed to the IRGC), Mahmoud Mousavi, stated, "The Zionist enemy sought to eliminate Iran's air defense capability, and some of our systems were damaged in this war. However, thanks to the efforts of my comrades, the damaged systems were replaced and deployed in pre-designated locations."

Mousavi did not clarify whether the replacement systems were domestically produced or imported.

The Chinese embassy in Israel denied claims that Beijing had supplied air defense systems to the Islamic Republic following the war. Additionally, recent reports allege that China has transferred missile fuel to Tehran.

Mousavi also claimed Israel did not act alone during the June conflict, threatening the U.S. and NATO by declaring that the Islamic Republic possesses military capabilities that reach beyond Israel.

Tehran and Moscow Launch Caspian Naval Drill

The Islamic Republic's Northern Fleet, alongside Russian naval forces, launched the three-day CASAREX 25 naval exercise in the Caspian Sea earlier today. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan are expected to send observers.

The Artesh Navy, IRGC Navy, and Law Enforcement Command naval units are participating alongside their Russian counterparts. The motto of the exercise is: "Together for the safe and secure Caspian Sea."

Meanwhile, the Kazakh Telegram channel Pervyjzus reported on 20 July that the exercise was "viewed with concern in Astana," noting that it carries "a whole set of complex signals and potential consequences for Kazakhstan," with particular concern regarding Russia's "drawing others into demonstrative joint actions."

Additionally, Islamic Republic Defense Minister Aziz Nasirzadeh met with his Russian counterpart, Andrei Belousov, in Moscow today to discuss strengthening military cooperation.

Supreme Leader Advisor Meets Putin

Ali Larijani, a senior adviser to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow yesterday in what state media described as an "unannounced" and "special visit."

Spokesperson for the Kremlin, Dmitry Peskov, said Larijani "conveyed assessments of the escalating situation in the Middle East and around the Iranian nuclear program," with Putin expressing support for regional stability and "the political settlement" of the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

On the Radar

- Islamic Republic Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi has arrived in New York today to attend meetings of the United Nations Security Council. During a meeting with the Red Cross President Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, Gharibabadi called Israel's claim that its strikes were in self-defense a "sheer lie."
- A Lebanese national has been sentenced to 44 months in prison for conspiring to illegally export U.S.-made oil rig machinery to Iran, violating U.S. sanctions. "The defendant conspired to export millions of dollars of U.S.-made heavy machinery to Iran, a leading state sponsor of terrorism," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Eisenberg.
- Over the weekend, at least four protests took place across Iran. Pensioners from the Social Security Organization held demonstrations in the cities of Tehran and Rasht. At the same time, members of the

Law Enforcement Housing Cooperative gathered in Arak, Markazi Province, to demonstrate their economic grievances. In Tehran, a group of parents protested outside the Ministry of Education over the administration and results of the SAMPAD (gifted) school entrance exam.

- Security forces have arrested three citizens in separate incidents in Jolfa, East Azerbaijan Province, Yasuj, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, and Naghadeh, West Azerbaijan Province. The individuals were detained without being presented with charges and were transferred to undisclosed locations
- IRGC-linked Tasnim News Agency reported that authorities have arrested two alleged "Mossad agents" in North Khorasan Province. During the 12-Day War, officials also charged 15 individuals in North Khorasan Province with "spreading lies," "disturbing public opinion," and "propaganda against the system."
- According to the Islamic Republic Foreign Ministry, undocumented Afghans in Iran have been given six weeks to leave the country voluntarily or face deportation and fines. Additionally, Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni said 800,000 Afghan nationals have already left Iran.
- President Pezeshkian has directed the agriculture, health, and foreign ministries to assess the country's food security and develop operational plans to protect national food supplies. Pezeshkian urged that the issue be addressed "at the highest managerial level" within each ministry.

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