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Brief Notes

President Promises 'Crushing Response' to Any Potential Strike: President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that any renewed Israeli strike in Iran would be met with a "decisive and crushing response." In a call with his Venezuelan counterpart, Nicolás Maduro, Pezeshkian said, "Our preference has always been peace and dialogue, but America... paved the way for the Zionist aggression." Maduro expressed full solidarity with the Islamic Republic, praising its "courage and decisiveness," which he said had "shattered the supremacy of the Zionists."

IRGC Warns of 'Devastating' Response to Any Potential Strike: Spokesperson for the IRGC, Ali Mohammad Naeini, today said the Islamic Republic will carry out an "even more devastating" response, should Israel launch another round of strikes. He added, "The enemy should be aware that if its aggression is repeated, the geography of our response and the battlefield itself may shift, and the consequences will be even more devastating."

Secretary of State Says Tehran Losing Support of China, Russia: U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, "I think everyone, China, Russia, even North Korea, have become a little more cautious about supporting Iran. Especially after our B-2s flew halfway around the world, conducted an operation and left, before anyone found out about it," in an interview with Fox News.

Tehran Daily Denies Supreme Leader Drug Use Reports: Farhikhtegan daily newspaper responded to a post by the self-described "Mossad Farsi" on X, which claims Ali Khamenei is addicted to opium. The newspaper called the post an attempt to "tarnish the Supreme Leader's image." The original Mossad Farsi post was picked up by outlets such as Fox News and the Jerusalem Post. Farhikhtegan labeled the incident an example of Israel's ongoing "media assassination" of the Islamic Republic's leadership.

Deepening Crisis: Water, Electricity, Now Bread

Bread prices in Iran have surged by up to 50%, with the most common types of bread used in Iranian households affected.

The surge comes amid rising inflation, subsidy cuts, and flour shortages, forcing many bakeries to purchase flour at higher prices from intermediaries rather than government-controlled distributors and sell above government-mandated rates.

With the minimum monthly wage at just $120 and inflation hitting 41.2%, growing poverty and economic pressure continue to strain Iranian households.

Cabinet Meets Amid Tehran Shutdowns

President Pezeshkian chaired a meeting of his cabinet today to discuss methods to manage the electricity and water shortage in the country.

He opposed proposals for additional mid-week or week-long holidays to reduce energy use, arguing that these measures may harm the economy.

Instead, Pezeshkian stressed the need for public awareness, local engagement, and coordinated efforts among media, government agencies, and civil society to promote "responsible consumption."

He blamed the public for overusing water, leading to the current crisis.

On the Radar

- Attending the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, the speaker of the Islamic Republic's Parliament, Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf, blamed U.S. interference for regional instability and called the Islamic Republic's military response to Israel "historic." He urged Islamic unity against Israel, which he labeled the "21st-century Nazis."
- The Islamic Republic has denied claims by Belgian MP Darya Safai that Tehran plotted to kidnap her via Turkey in retaliation for her efforts to designate the IRGC a terrorist group in Europe. Safai said Belgian security warned her of a credible threat, but the Islamic Republic's EU mission dismissed her allegations as fabricated and politically motivated.
- Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Sahin Mustafayev and the Islamic Republic's ambassador to Baku, Mojtaba Damirchilou, met to discuss increased cooperation in trade, transport, and infrastructure, and to consider methods to expedite the implementation of past agreements. Officials representing both governments, in another meeting, also discussed media collaboration and the resumption of flights between Baku and Tabriz.
- President Pezeshkian said today that he has "no problem" with a recently circulated political cartoon depicting him on a donkey. Despite this, the judiciary filed charges against the cartoonist yesterday.
- Twelve Iranian fishermen detained for entering Saudi waters without authorization have been released and returned to Iran, according to the Mizan News Agency today.
- The administration of President Pezeshkian has temporarily withdrawn a controversial bill targeting "fake news" online. The bill was supposed to be assessed by the Majles (parliament) today. The move comes after the bill, seen as a national security measure, passed an initial parliamentary vote. If ratified, it would have further limited the scant freedom of speech available in Iran.

- Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein and Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan discussed regional developments and emphasized the importance of reviving U.S.-Islamic Republic nuclear talks to ease tensions.
- Footage circulated today showing a plume of smoke rising from Tehran's Shahran oil depot, which had previously burned for days after being targeted during the 12-Day War. National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company linked the smoke to the cleanup of damaged fuel tanks and not due to any new incident.
- Islamic Republic forces arrested Ehsan Hosseini, an Afghan activist living in Qom, at his home yesterday. They confiscated his phone and electronic devices. Hosseini had previously worked with academic and civil institutions on migrant rights. His whereabouts and the reasons for his arrest remain unknown.
- IRGC intelligence officers arrested Forough Khosravi, a primary school teacher from Behbahan, on Monday, July 28. Authorities had previously raided her home in her absence on June 19 and confiscated a cell phone. Her family still has no information about her whereabouts or the charges against her.
- The judiciary of Iran's Kurdistan Province announced the opening of a criminal investigation into a massive fire on Abidar Mountain in Sanandaj that killed three environmental activists. Judicial and law enforcement authorities have been ordered to identify and prosecute those potentially responsible for the incident.

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