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Brief Notes

$15M Reward for Info on IRGC Money Launderers: The U.S. State Department is offering a reward of up to $15 million for information leading to the disruption of the IRGC's operations, specifically flagging two Iranian nationals, Mehdi Farshchi and Majid Nili, accused of supplying sensitive technology to the Islamic Republic's military industries and of laundering funds on behalf of the IRGC through the company Beh Joul Pars (BJP). The release added that Nili serves as Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of BJP's Esfahan Branch and Farshchi serves as Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of BJP's Tehran Branch.

Crackdown on Iranian Rappers: The Islamic Republic's authorities have arrested five rappers in a new crackdown on underground music and online expression. Rappers Meshki (Danial Faraji) and Dalu (Amir Ardalan Aqashahi) were detained in Tehran for posting "unconventional and controversial" content. Both appeared in televised forced "confession" videos expressing remorse and blaming foreign media influence. Meshki, known for his political performances while wearing a black ski mask, removed his mask publicly for the first time in his forced "confession." Separately, security forces also arrested rappers Arash Sayyadi, Ashkan Shekariyan Moghadam, and Rassam Sohrabi, who appeared shirtless with shaved heads in another video apologizing to law enforcement and judicial authorities. The videos have widely circulated online.

Tehran Portrays Gaza Ceasefire as Israeli Defeat

Friday prayer Imams throughout the country echoed the Islamic Republic's official stance on the U.S.-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. In Tehran, Mohammad Javad Haj Ali Akbari urged IRGC-backed terror groups like Hamas and Hezbollah to use the truce "to prepare for dealing heavier blows against the Zionist Regime," warning that "the Zionist regime cannot be trusted." In Yazd, Nasser Mohammadi rejected calling the ceasefire "peace," saying, "Peace with the usurping and child-killing Zionist regime… is meaningless."

Mohammadi, in his sermon, criticized the U.S. plan as a "deceptive 20-point scheme," and praised Hamas for accepting the deal only "to free Palestinians from hunger and casualties." He cautioned that Israel and the U.S. might violate the truce, declaring that the "annihilation of the usurping and child-killing regime is inevitable."

Meanwhile, state media and officials reacted to the ceasefire with skepticism, emphasizing alleged Israeli violations and warning of "bad faith" intentions. State broadcasters, IRINN TV and Radio Iran, claimed Israel had struck Gaza "over 10 times" despite pledging to halt attacks.

Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to the Supreme Leader on international affairs, warned that the ceasefire might precede broader regional conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, or Lebanon.

On the Radar

- Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei condemned recent U.S. military strikes near Venezuela as "provocative and destabilizing." In a statement today, he accused Washington of "lawlessness and aggressive unilateralism" for strikes on "fishing boats" and violations of "Venezuela's sovereignty and territorial integrity."
- Deputy Chief of Staff to the President, Abbas Mousavi, mocked President Trump's failed bid for the Nobel Peace Prize, saying his "record of war and genocide complicity" disqualified him. "He turned the Department of Defense into the Department of War… gave the Israeli regime a free hand in the historic genocide in Gaza, yet he still expected to receive the Nobel Peace Prize," Mousavi wrote on X, calling Trump "a modern-day Don Quixote."
- Head of the Law Enforcement Command, Ahmad Reza Radan, defended the mass deportation of undocumented Afghan migrants as essential for national security, stating that "the presence of illegal foreign nationals is not acceptable." He said over 1.2 million Afghans were expelled last year as part of the Islamic Republic's crackdown. Despite hosting some six million Afghans, Tehran has intensified expulsions and warned that millions more could be deported by March 2026. Radan also addressed recent clashes in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, claiming security has improved thanks to stronger border controls and cooperation from locals, although some cross-border attacks by Pakistani militant groups have continued.

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