Brief Notes

Tehran Reservoir Levels Continue to Fall: Satellite imagery reviewed by BBC Verify shows sharp drops in water levels across the reservoirs supplying Tehran, deepening fears of an impending water crisis. Authorities recently warned that rationing water may be unavoidable after the city's five main reservoirs were left only 11% full. This comes after earlier warnings from President Pezeshkian that the capital may ultimately need to be relocated if the water crisis persists. New Sentinel-2 imagery of the Karaj reservoir from late November confirms a significant drop compared with the same period last year.

Parliament Speaker Hails 12-Day War 'Victory,' Criticizes Europe as 'Clumsy': During a live press conference, Majles (Parliament) Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf hailed Tehran's "victory" over Israel during the 12-Day War, claiming over 70% of Islamic Republic missiles hit their targets. He also vowed that, in any future confrontation, the regime's response would be "more effective and accurate." He criticized Europe's snapback of UN sanctions as "clumsy" and driven by Washington, arguing Europe has lost influence in nuclear negotiations and negotiations to end the conflict in Ukraine. Domestically, he addressed frustration over the perceived non-enforcement of hijab rules, and questioned whether the government's new three-tier fuel pricing would reduce fuel smuggling.

Taliban Claims Regime Border Guards Killed Ten Afghans in Single Incident: A Taliban official said Islamic Republic border guards opened fire on a group of Afghan migrants attempting to cross through the Mahirud corridor, also known as Mil-78, killing at least ten, with some reports putting the toll at twelve. Local sources told Afghan outlets that a group of 35 people came under fire and that several bodies have been transferred to Farah Provincial Hospital, with others still missing. Tehran has not commented, but similar incidents have been reported amid the regime's intensified campaign to expel up to two million undocumented Afghans by March 2026.

Leak Suggests Supreme Leader, President Ordered Renewed Hijab Enforcement

A leaked audio file suggests Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has issued a written order instructing the government to intensify enforcement of the mandatory hijab, reversing the more "relaxed" approach seen since the 2022 uprising and the 12-Day War. Senior cleric Hossein Rafiei claimed some ministers objected, but that President

Pezeshkian insisted on complying, a point later confirmed, but downplayed, by a Pezeshkian administration spokesman.

Another Pezeshkian administration spokesperson, Fatemeh Mohajerani, has since said the intelligence ministry's report on hijab was submitted to both Pezeshkian and Khamenei, adding that measures are being planned "to prevent organized movements."

The leak reframes recent official remarks, including Pezeshkian's warnings that coercive tactics risk triggering unrest the government cannot manage and his call for state institutions to model adherence internally.

This comes after last week's controversy regarding an ostensibly leaked directive from Pezeshkian to implement a new fuel pricing scheme. These controversies in quick succession have created an atmosphere of distrust in Pezeshkian among his supporters. It also coincides with a broader tightening of cultural controls: closures of cafes and venues for alleged morality violations, heightened scrutiny of public events, and expansion of administrative tools such as SIM card deactivation.

Hardline figures have treated the directive as a green light to escalate pressure, launching public campaigns and framing the order as an explicit mandate for decisive action against perceived violators. Conservative outlets aligned with senior power centers warned against any hesitation, arguing that firm enforcement is now the state's obligation and portraying the leak as proof that authorities must assert control after months of perceived laxity.

On the Radar

- A regime court has ordered the U.S. to pay roughly $22 billion to families of those killed during the 2022 Mahsa Amini uprising, accusing Washington of providing support to protesters, which in turn made it liable for the deaths. The ruling frames the protests as "riots" and shifts blame outward despite extensive evidence of the regime's own lethal crackdown. The damages were calculated based on varying assessments of moral and material harm claimed by the "plaintiffs".
- BBC Verify has identified multiple pro-Scottish independence accounts whose X location data shows access from Iran, despite posing as users in Dundee and Glasgow. The profiles use stolen photos and shifted their displayed locations only after the platform revealed more precise metadata. X's data indicated they were accessing the app from "West Asia" via Android, previously showing the Netherlands and then Iran. The findings echo a 2024 Clemson University report that linked a similar influence network to the IRGC.
- Brig. Gen. Cyrus Amanollahi has been named Deputy Commander for Operations of the Islamic Republic's Artesh (non-IRGC, conventional military) Ground Forces, replacing Brig. Gen. Farhad Aryanfar. Before his appointment, Amanollahi led the Artesh's northeast regional headquarters and had held several senior posts, including commander of the northwestern regional headquarters and the 65th Airborne Special

Forces Brigade. His appointment follows the November 22 naming of Brig. Gen. Ali Jahanshahi as the new overall commander of the Ground Forces.

→ *For inquiries or more information, please contact* ***k.isfahani@nufdiran.org***