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Battlefronts multiple, US strategically confused



EDITORIAL

The history of the United States is a chronicle of warfare; scarcely can one find a major conflict in the world that does not have a direct or indirect connection to the US. One needs not thumb through history, though, as American militarism has been markedly conspicuous in the past two or three decades. However, a noteworthy aspect in all of the United States' wars is that, while often the initiator, the country has rarely been the one to bring them to a conclusive end. The military campaigns to occupy Afghanistan and Iraq, initially driven by the aspiration to shape an American Middle East, have not only failed in materializing that ambition but have also made the situation more challenging for the US.

Despite consistent criticism of the war policies of the country by most think tanks, especially American ones, and even by elites and policymakers in the US, it remains unclear why the US does not undergo a fundamental reassessment of its geopolitical stance. Perhaps, at best, these criticisms and rebukes resulted in an increased caution in initiating new wars; a caution demonstrated more in the form of "delaying the onset of wars" rather than "hesitation" in them.

While the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq wars have not been resolved and may still have repercussions, intervention in the Russia-Ukraine war has opened a new dossier for the US; a dossier that, rather than being an achievement, has now become a focal point for political disputes between the US government and Congress.

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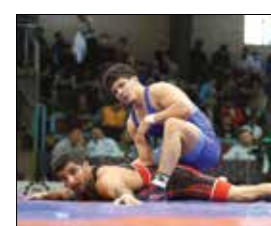
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Battlefronts multiple, US ...

On the other hand, amid the heightened conflict between Hamas and Israel, another segment of US military power is currently engaged in supporting Israel, and the recent joint attack with the UK on Yemen has opened up a new front against this country. Despite all these developments, following the news of a potential visit by a delegation of US congresspersons to Taiwan in May, China has expressed its opposition, hinting at a tense future on that front as well.

Biden recently stated that the US is not inclined to engage in proxy wars, but the issue is that even if proxy wars were to occur, they would be initiated by the United States' adversaries, not by the country itself or its allies. In fact, in the current circumstances, direct intervention against countries that, according to the US's definition, act as proxies, will not only be impossible for the US and its allies to win but will also be highly detrimental to them. This will surely be the case even with the assumption that European countries are supposed to coordinate with the US. However, considering the reluctance of France, Italy, and Spain to provide military and even political support for the recent attacks on Yemen, this assumption must realistically be considered null and void. Given these considerations, the path ahead for the US is highly challenging and full of complexities. Particularly noteworthy is that American plans are never so intricate that they can catch other countries by surprise. Currently, its military and political capabilities are decentralized and vulnerable, even when countries like Iran, Lebanon, and Syria have yet to take significant actions. These factors make it difficult to precisely forecast the strategies these nations intend to pursue.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist



NIGC exporting gas to Iraq as planned

The director of dispatching at the National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said gas export to Iraq is continuing according to the agreement.

Iran is exporting gas to Iraq via two exchange points, added Saeid Aqli, explaining, "Based on the agreement reached between Iran and Iraq two months ago, one of the exchange points was disconnected to undergo a calibration process, and has been now reconnected," Shana reported.

Calibration is a normal process in gas exports and not limited to the Iran-Iraq contract, pointed

out the NIGC official.

A senior Iranian businessman said in July 2023 that the deal between Iran and Iraq to swap Iranian gas and electricity for Iraqi crude oil and mazut will benefit Iran and remove hurdles created by the United States in energy trade between the two neighboring countries.

"With this agreement with Iraq for barter of oil for gas, the US ability to stonewall (payments) will be restricted, and given Iraq's situation, the deal can benefit Iran," said Hamid Hosseini, who serves as the board manager at Iranian Oil, Gas, and

Petrochemical Products Exporters Union (OPEX).

Hosseini said that Iran will be able to receive some 30,000 barrels per day (bpd) of heavy grade crude oil and a 70,000 bpd of mazut from Iraq to compensate for a part of its supply of natural gas and electricity to Iraq, which he said is believed to be between \$10 million and \$15 million per day.

Facing a lower supply of natural gas from Iran to its power plants, Iraq was grappling with extensive power cuts during the scorching heat of early July. The Arab country finally decided



to agree to a long-running proposal from Iran to pay for the country's natural gas and electricity in crude oil.

The agreement came after repeated US attempts to stonewall the payment of nearly \$11 billion worth of funds to Iran that

the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity had deposited into accounts in the Trade Bank of Iraq.

The agreement allowed Iran to restore its supply of natural gas to Iraqi power plants to levels agreed between the two countries under a gas export deal.

NDF allocates €1b to Makran Coast development

Iran's National Development Fund (NDF) allocated €1 billion for the development of the Makran Coast, south of Iran.

According to Article 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the government

approved a plan in a meeting held on January 3, 2024, to allocate €1 billion in support of the NDF for the development of the Makran Coast, wrote Tasnim News Agency.

After gaining the approval of relevant

legal bodies and within the framework regulations, the fund will deposit €1 billion in banks. It will be paid in the form of facilities to the applicants introduced by the Secretariat of the Supreme Council for the Development of

Makran Coast.

This is in line with Iran's plans for the development of the Makran Coast, the development of a sustainable sea-based economy, and the growth of industries in the ports, the report added.

Managing US-Iran tensions has proven successful



By Ebrahim Beheshti
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

The US and UK's attack on positions affiliated with the Ansarallah group in Yemen comes at a time when the US claims to be striving to prevent an escalation of conflict in the region. Will the attackers achieve their intended goal of maritime security in Yemen? Will the policy of managing tensions between Iran and the US continue? Why does the US not persuade Israel to accept a cease-fire? These are some of the questions Iran Daily posed to Amir Ali Abolfat'h, an expert on US affairs, in an exclusive interview.

IRAN DAILY: The United States, on one hand, claims that its policy is aimed at preventing the escalation and expansion of Gaza war in

the region, while, on the other hand, it attacks the positions of Ansarallah (Houthis) in Yemen. How do you make sense of this contradiction?

ABOLFAT'H: The US contends that the attack on Yemen also serves a deterrent purpose to prevent the expansion of the war in the region. They hope that the attack on Yemen sends a strong message to both the Ansarallah and, according to their claim, their supporter, meaning the Islamic Republic of Iran, to refrain from threatening navigation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. However, this objective is yet to be realized, as the Yemeni military responded quickly after the initial attacks by the US and the UK. I genuinely don't know how Yemen will react further, but their declared policy is to respond to attacks by the US and the UK. Meanwhile, the US president explicitly stated that he



does not intend to engage in war with Iran, and by extension, Yemen.

Do you predict that the Yemenis will capitulate? Will the maritime security desired by the US be restored to the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb?

As for predicting the Yemeni response, it's challenging to make a precise assessment. Irrespective of Yemen's reaction, the crucial point is whether security in the Bab al-Mandeb will return to its pre-Israeli attack state. My prediction is that, at least soon, such security will not be restored, and maritime transport through this waterway will not be as feasible as before. Currently, major economic enterprises and shipping companies consider this region unsafe. A missile may be fired, or a mine encountered in the sea at any moment. Consequently, ships either avoid this route or pass through with higher insurance costs, which translates into economic setbacks for these companies. The superior military power of the US does not guarantee security for maritime shipping in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandeb. It's worth noting, however, that the Yemenis only target ships heading towards

Israel, not those of other nations.

The Americans claim that the attack on Yemen is aimed at ensuring maritime security and is unrelated to the Gaza war. Are these claims accepted by public opinion and other governments?

Certainly, the attack on Yemen is related to the Gaza war. Yemenis did not attack ships heading to Israel without cause. They took such measures to support the Palestinian people and exert pressure on Israel. It is natural that, as the conflict in Gaza intensifies and prolongs, such reactions may spread to other regions, causing further insecurity. But if the Gaza war subsides, areas associated with the Gaza conflict may also experience relative calm. The world does not believe that these are unrelated.

The Guardian has suggested in an article that instead of attacking Yemenis, the US and the UK should pressure Israel to cease the Gaza war. Does the US genuinely not want a cease-fire, or does it lack the capability to persuade Israel to accept one?

The US is caught in a difficult situation. On one hand, it cannot pressure

Israel to accept a cease-fire, as Israel has declared that a cease-fire would mean its defeat and victory for Hamas. On the other hand, the US cannot remain silent about the extent of atrocities and genocide, especially with the upcoming US elections and existence of strong active anti-war movements in the country.

It appears that the US is moving towards de-escalation in Gaza; a situation where the conflict is only with Hamas, and non-combatants are not harmed, with humanitarian aid being provided. However, due to the limited land area of the Gaza Strip and the people's connection with Hamas, this American plan is not operational. Currently, it seems that due to global public pressures, the scale of war and the intensity of massacres in Gaza have diminished.

The US has stated that it is not seeking war with Iran. Iran has also stated that it is not seeking war with the US or Israel. How should the common position of the US and Iran, with the former supporting Israel and the latter supporting Hamas, be evaluated?

Iran has never sought war, neither with the US nor with any other country. In Iran's security strategy, preemptive war is not present, but defensive deterrence is very pronounced. Iran has stated that resistance groups in various countries operate independently, although they receive support from Iran. Therefore, it is unjustifiable for Iran to be held accountable for the measures of the Yemenis or the Iraqis, for example. The US is aware of this. Messages have been ex-

changed between Iran and the US, and both sides have clarified their positions. In fact, the goal of both Iran and the US in the Gaza war is the same — to stop the war — but they use different methods. The US believes that the destruction or severe weakening of Hamas will lead to the end of the conflict, but Iran does not accept this. Except for the hardline Israeli cabinet, everyone else supports stopping the war.

Before the latest round of inconclusive nuclear talks between Iran and the US followed by Hamas's surprise attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, it was said that Tehran and Washington had a common will to control and manage tensions. Do these two countries still pursue this policy after the Gaza war?

Yes. Although the level of bilateral tensions has increased compared to six or seven months ago, both sides still strive to manage tensions and prevent their escalation. Iran and the US are far from reaching a de-escalated state, but it seems that both sides are not inclined towards intensifying tensions, either. So far, it appears that this policy has been successful, as, contrary to some speculations, neither direct confrontation between Iran and Israel nor between Iran and the US has occurred. The US president stating, "We are not in a proxy war with Iran," is good news, and it is in line with the same tension management policy. Nevertheless, both parties must be vigilant about actors who, for whatever reason, seek to undermine the control of tensions between Iran and the US.

Morteza Ali Spring in Tabas allures visitors



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Iranica Desk

Morteza Ali Spring is situated in the eastern part of Tabas, South Khorasan Province, and is composed of a series of several springs that flow from the southern slopes of Kesh Siah Mountain towards the west. This spring is renowned for its therapeutic properties and is a major attraction in Tabas, drawing numerous tourists. What makes it truly unique is the presence of both hot and cold springs situated parallel to each other in a valley, creating a phenomenon that is rare and fascinating. Adding to its allure, one of the world's tallest arch dams is located at the end of the spring's route. Visitors to this spring will also encounter ancient cavities in the narrow walls which belong to the Zoroastrians. Morteza Ali Spring is formed by three main and several secondary springs, making it a remarkable oasis in the heart of the desert. The first spring, known as Qanbar, flows from east to west along the valley, providing cold water. Six kilometers further, there is a hot spring formed by the breaking and pressure of a fault. The water from these

two springs converges and forms a river, which ultimately joins the last spring named Jafari. The water from these three springs reaches an earthen dam named Nahrin, which is the primary water source for the farms and gardens.

The hot spring water flowing into the river from the right creates a temperature difference in the river, sometimes reaching 10 degrees Celsius. Due to its higher concentration and structural differences, the hot water does not completely mix with the cold water, resulting in both types of water flowing together for up to 300 meters. As a result, when you step into the river, you will be astonished to find that one foot is in warm water and the other in cool water. This rare phenomenon cannot be experienced elsewhere in the country. The total walking time along the entire route is approximately 40 minutes.

Throughout the river route, there are multiple springs, and an interesting point about them is the temperature difference, with some being cooler and others warmer.

In addition to all these nat-

ural attractions, one of the main reasons domestic and foreign tourists visit the spring is its therapeutic properties, as its mineral substances and salts can be beneficial and effective in treating certain diseases.

Walking in the water

One of the most thrilling parts of visiting Morteza Ali Spring is walking along the river path with giant boulders, especially when you hear the delightful sound of the springs flowing from among the rugged rocks. Playing in the water in this space can be appealing and charming for any tourist; however, be mindful of the large and slippery rocks to avoid any harm to yourself. As you proceed along the path, the depth and volume of the water increase, and in some places, by arranging stones, they have created small pools for swimming, tempting everyone for a dip. Interestingly, there are snails and fish living in this spring; you can feed them bread crumbs and see them up close. If you sit very quietly in the pools you will see small fish coming towards you. In the sections where the pools are deeper, there is a type of fish that is useful for



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treating certain skin diseases and eats dead skin cells.

Rock cavities

As you follow the path, you will notice cavities and holes on the rocks on both sides that have been meticulously created and connected to each other through a tunnel. These formations, known as the "Gabr House," date back to 1,500 years ago and belong to the Sassanid era. Accessing these cavities is challenging and requires the use of complete rock climbing and mountaineering equipment as well as the necessary skills to navigate them.

It is believed that these cavities served as the burial place of Zoroastrians. Some

speculate that these formations were used as houses. Interestingly, these cavities are positioned at specific intervals from each other and in pairs at the bottom and top, giving the impression that the lower cavity served as the entrance to the house.

Abbasid Dam

Further along the path, as the spring water reaches its end, you will encounter a historical relic from the Safavid era known as the Abbasid Dam. This 60-meter-high dam not only holds the title of one of the oldest arched dams in the world, but also held the record as the tallest dam in the world for 550 years.

Ancient legacy of Damghan and Hesar Hill

Iranica Desk

Hecatompylos, the ancient name for the city of Damghan in Semnan Province, is one of the oldest cities in Iran and was once the capital of the Parthian Empire. Throughout history, Damghan has been a significant location as it lies on the Silk Road, serving as a passage from west to east. The city's importance is evident from its mention in numerous geographical and historical texts, highlighting its ancient significance.

The presence of caravanserais, fortresses, ancient hills, towers, and a massive inner and outer wall surrounding the city of Damghan further emphasizes its historical importance. The city currently boasts over 500 identified historical sites, with 134 tangible and intangible works registered on Iran's National Heritage List. Notable landmarks in this county include the historical fortification site dating back



IRNA

7,000 years, the ancient mosque known as one of the most important mosques of the early Islamic periods, the Haj Ali Qoli Salt Lake, the Shirband Cave, with its beautiful stalactites dating back millions of years, the Cheshmeh Ali

complex featuring a remarkable spring, and the historical mansions from the Qajar and Safavid eras.

Hesar Hill was the largest population center in northeastern Iran during the Chalcolithic pe-



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riod (5,500 to 3,500 years ago). Excavations and studies have revealed its important role in interregional communications. The discovery of clay tablets with cuneiform inscriptions indicates commercial relations of this

Chalcolithic city with contemporary centers in Mesopotamia and Elam.

The significance of Hesar Hill extends beyond the current borders of Iran, as its name is mentioned in international and

domestic literature about the cultural developments of northeastern Iran and Central Asia. The artifacts from various periods up to the Islamic era illustrate the cultural and social transformations, emphasizing the endless importance of this area to modern Iranian society.

As a rich source of historical and archeological information, Hesar Hill plays a crucial role in understanding cultural exchanges between different peoples and societies. It also serves as a cultural tourist attraction, attracting visitors and contributing to public education.

In conclusion, Hesar Hill is not only a symbol of the continuous human presence in the region but also a key element in preserving and promoting ancient Iranian culture. It acts as a window to the past, facilitating meaningful connections between different generations and contributing to the understanding of our cultural identity.

Rise of Southeast Asia as an economic hub

EXCLUSIVE ANALYSIS It has been some time since the name and importance of Southeast Asia suddenly re-emerged in discussions. The remarkable economic growth in the countries of this region has led to a notable position among the fastest-growing regions worldwide. Moreover, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) is gradually evolving into a geopolitical center, attracting international attention. Some analysts believe that countries in Southeast Asia can not only benefit from the support of multinational corporations amid escalating geopolitical tensions but also that this region is progressively transforming into a new global production hub. It quickly becomes evident that this region has been an appealing destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with an export focus long before the COVID crisis.

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With rising business costs in China, Southeast Asian countries have gained a better position providing a more attractive environment for investment and collaboration.

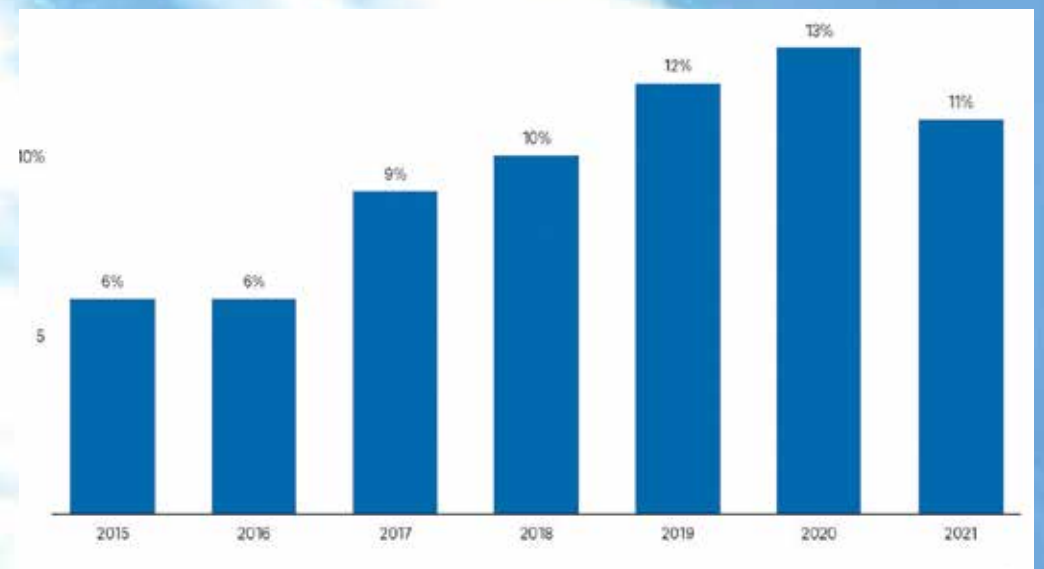
With rising business costs in China, Southeast Asian countries have gained a better position providing a more attractive environment for investment and collaboration. Since 2018, with increased US tariffs on imports from China and signs of growing trade separation between the two, Southeast Asia has experienced a notable improvement in its position. It is not only the United States increasing imports from this region, but China is also buying more goods from Southeast Asia while reducing its imports from the United States.

To clarify this claim, some examples can be mentioned. Vietnam and Cambodia's exports to the United States have increased by 165% and 231%, respectively. Although ASEAN's share of total US imports is not yet significant

(6.10% in 2022), this fact should not divert attention from the overall dynamics of the matter. Countries like Vietnam and Cambodia are emerging as production hubs, and it's not just the United States increasing imports from the region – China is following the same path. Now, the noteworthy point is the increasing trend of Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN, particularly in the production sector.

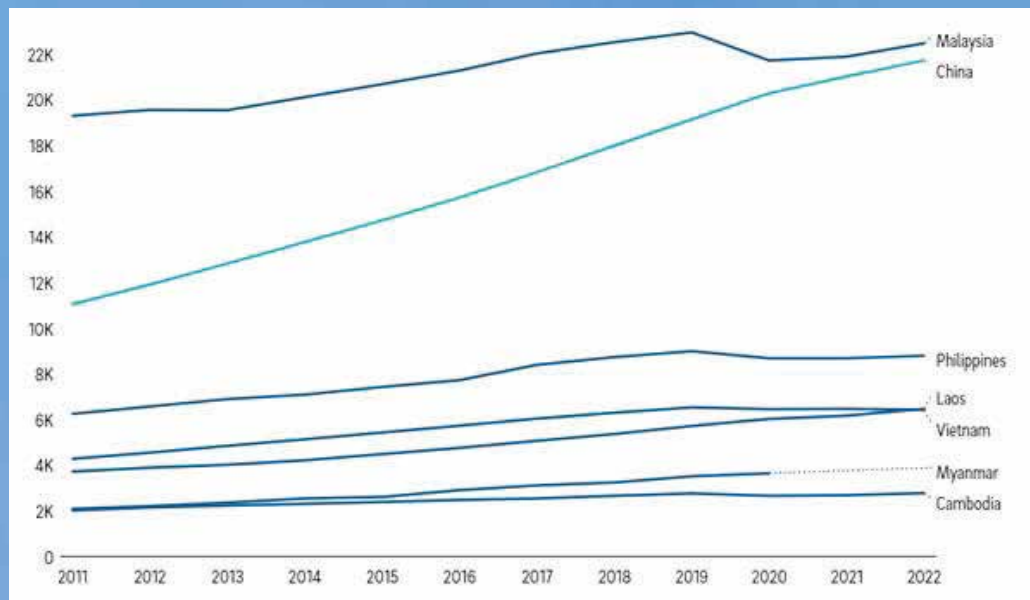
Some structural changes based on recent developments are occurring, primarily favoring the supply chain of ASEAN. For instance, as China strengthens its targeted value chain, its cost advantage is diminishing, as labor is no longer as inexpensive as before.

Since 2013, production wages in China have doubled, reaching an average of around \$27.8



↑ Increase in the popularity of Southeast Asia among investors - Share of global FDI flow towards Asia (Percentage Share)





Productivity Gap - GDP per worker [Constant 2015 GDP, in thousand US dollars]

per hour. This increase contrasts sharply with production wages in Vietnam, Thailand, or Malaysia, which remain below \$3 per hour on average. However, low wages are not the only significant advantage of Southeast Asia. Singapore has become a crucial player in advanced financial services and technology. Meanwhile, Southeast Asia can attract a considerable number of individuals aged 25 to 54, with higher education. Nevertheless, a sole focus on cost disparities can be misleading, as the issue of an efficiency gap remains significant. The reality is that most Southeast Asian countries cannot compete with China in terms of output per worker.

An instructive point for companies seeking alternatives in the supply chain is twofold: first, analyzing the “how of achieving lower production costs versus reducing efficiency rates,” and secondly, assessing whether, over time, addressing efficiency challenges can be achieved through on-the-job training and infrastructure improvement. It should be noted that the second aspect is crucial, as some cost advantages in Southeast Asia are likely to decrease in the coming decade.

What makes the ASEAN supply chain so distinctive?

Countries in ASEAN, like their Northeast Asian neighbors, opt for industrialization based on foreign direct investment and can be categorized into three groups. The first category is Singapore, functioning as a technological hub. The second category is the ASEAN-4 group (including Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines), known as newly industrialized economies with a mix of competitiveness. Finally, the third category includes the CLMV group (comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam), which holds appeal for companies primarily seeking cost reduction.

The supply chains of ASEAN are deeply integrated with the neighboring countries in Northeast Asia. Economists often use the “flying geese” pattern to explain the division of labor in the region, where Japan serves as the technology leader against newly industrialized economies and developing countries.

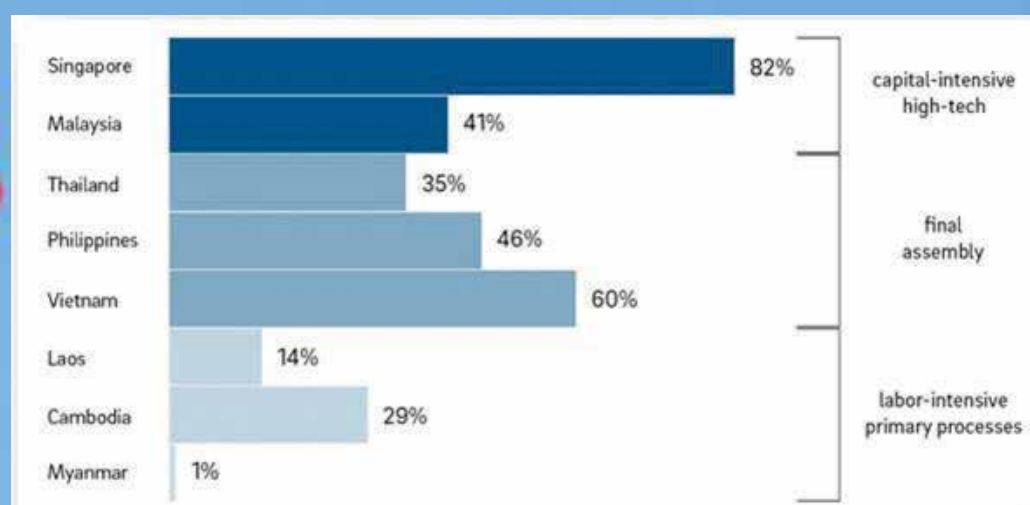
In the network of Multinational Enterprises (MNEs), and in the pursuit of maximizing competitiveness in terms of cost and technology and cross-border transportation of a product throughout its production life cycle, regional supply chains dynamically evolve.

Due to its significant impact in the electronics and automotive industries, ASEAN will play a greater role in reshaping global value chains to enhance the flexibility of supply chains. Also, due to the cohesive regional division of labor, we witness the expansion of Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese multinational companies as strong (and shifting) leaders, similar to what happens in the flying geese pattern. However, the industry in Southeast Asia, facing the industrialization puzzle led by FDI, mainly based on technology input and the supply chain network of multinational corporations rather than competitive local companies, has encountered challenges.

Shift of electronic industry to ASEAN

The electronic industry, due to its reliance on modular technology, standardization, and high value-to-weight ratio, is significantly dispersed internationally and well-integrated into global and regional networks. This sector represents the largest export industry, allocating 29% of the total export value of the Southeast Asian region in 2022, varying between 20% and 50% in each country within the ASEAN region. With a share of \$268 billion in regional gross domestic product, it guides the region’s economic growth, and created over 4.2 million jobs in 2019. Over the past three decades, ASEAN’s participation in the global value chain for the electronic industry has decreased from 3.74% to 68.9% of the value-added of exports. Meanwhile, its regional value chain participation has doubled from 7.8% to 8.17%, indicating a stronger regional production network.

Currently, the average foreign value-added in ASEAN’s export sector is around 53%, with major contributors being China, Japan, the United States, and Germany. Historically, China has surpassed Japan as the largest contributor, reflecting the relocation of multinational corporations and their shift to China, elevating



Diversification into Specialized Sectors - Share of foreign value-added in electrical and electronic equipment, 2017 [Percentage Share]

China in the value chain from “final assembly” to “provider of intermediate goods” and, in some cases, to “leading companies”. The foreign value chain participation in the electronic industry is higher in certain countries, such as those with significant investments in advanced technologies like Singapore and Malaysia, compared to others mostly involved in final assembly, like Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam. In Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar, this share is lower due to their status in initial labor-intensive processes. Meanwhile, Indonesia’s industry is focused on the domestic market, while Brunei remains an economy heavily reliant on fossil fuels.

Obstacles

Numerous obstacles lie ahead on the path for Southeast Asia to become an immediate substitute for China as the world’s factory. For this shift to happen, supply chains in this region need to become much more efficient and integrated. Currently, trade between countries in ASEAN faces significant challenges. On one hand, the lack of quality infrastructure hinders the seamless flow of goods from the outset. On the other hand, fundamental regulations and legal agreements between countries are absent, as regional differences and national ambitions stand in the way of forming a beneficial consensus. Moreover, a strong dependence on Chinese goods poses another obstacle for the region’s ability to transform into a new global production hub. Similarly, the transition to a low-carbon economy is a major challenge for Southeast Asia. If these challenges are not addressed rapidly and sufficiently, the region’s competitive advantages may quickly diminish, solidifying the possibility of losing competitiveness in Southeast Asia.

Center for Strategic Studies of Entrepreneurship in Iran



The gradual rise in economic power in East Asia as a new production hub presents new opportunities for Iran.

Iran’s strategic position and emerging Asian Century



At the end of the 20th century, the unipolar world and the Western international system underwent extensive changes; changes that led to the decline of the West and the rise of Asia. The 21st century, or more aptly, the Asian Century, marks a shift in global power from the West to the East. Moreover, with the beginning of this century, we are witnessing the gradual rise of East Asia’s economic power worldwide.

This gradual rise in economic power in East Asia as a new production hub presents new opportunities for Iran. Considering that in August 2018, Iran signed the document of accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in Singapore, the country can secure a significant share of this change in the center of power and seize a significant portion of this emerging power with the help of its economic drivers and industries.

The geopolitical and strategic position of Iran in the region, coupled with its accession to ASEAN’s TAC in Singapore, involving influential East Asian countries such as the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Brunei, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Cambodia, renders Iran as a key player in this changing landscape.

Iran, with its significant potential in various areas, including access to the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, valuable oil and gas reserves, and advancements in technology, especially in the past decade, must leverage these assets. Establishing constructive and multi-faceted interactions could help overcome the weaknesses and setbacks of recent years, enabling Iran to attain the level of the ASEAN economic bloc.

According to international relations experts, Iran needs to revive its lost position in communication corridors, acting as a crucial bridge between the markets of East Asia and the West. In recent decades, East Asia has successfully positioned itself as a primary rival to the United States and prominent Western powers through long-term strategic planning.

This strategic planning and proper management have led Asian countries not to be dependent, weak, and passive players in the international arena anymore. Instead, gradually, these countries have transformed into executors who, with independent actions, claim leadership ahead of dominant power-seeking states.

Iranian Entrepreneurs Association

Iranian Safdarian crowned at Ice Climbing World Cup



● PATRICK SCHWIENBACHER

Sports Desk

Iran's Mohammadreza Safdarian claimed a prestigious gold medal in the UIAA Ice Climbing World Cup in Cheongsong, South Korea. Representing the country in the men's speed event, Safdarian clocked 15.34 seconds in the final to edge Mongolian Kherlen Nyamdoo, who finished the race in 15.99 seconds, to the gold, with the host's Lim Hyeongsu taking the bronze. This was a second World Cup gold

for the 32-year-old Iranian following his historic lead triumph in Italy six years ago – a maiden top prize for the country in the history of the competition. Also a winner of five World Championships medals – including a combined gold in 2022 – Safdarian bagged a second World Cup medal in 2018, when he took the lead bronze in Switzerland, before winning a silver in the same category in the 2019/20 season in Changchun, China.

Tractor signs Honduran striker Quioto

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor signed Honduran striker Romell Quioto as a free agent on a year-and-a-half long contract. Quioto, 32, is the first midseason signing for the Iranian club, which is fourth in the top-flight table with 28 points after 15 rounds of matches – four points adrift of league leader Esteghlal. Quioto spent the last four years with Canadian side CF Montréal, where he bagged 38 goals and 19 assists in 94 appearances across all competitions – including 33 strikes in the Major League Soccer. The Honduran is to join up with his new teammates in a training camp in Antalya, Turkey. Capped on 63 occasions for the na-



● DIEZ

tional team, Quioto has netted 13 international goals since his first game for the country in 2012. A U.S. Open Cup champion with Houston Dynamo in 2018, Quioto was part of the Honduras under-23 team in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, scoring once in six outings to help the team reach the semifinals before falling to a defeat against Nigeria in the bronze-medal match.

Injured Berrettini withdraws from Australian Open



● USA TODAY SPORTS

REUTERS – Former world number six Matteo Berrettini has withdrawn from the Australian Open due to a foot injury, organisers said on Sunday. Berrettini was due to face Greek seventh seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in a high-profile first-round match today. "Matteo Berrettini has withdrawn from the Australian Open with a right foot injury. He will be replaced in the draw by Zizou Bergs. Wishing you a quick recovery," or-

ganisers said in a statement. Berrettini had an injury-riddled 2023 season, which was brought to an end when he was forced to withdraw from his second-round match at the U.S. Open after injuring an ankle. The 27-year-old, who also missed a few weeks of action in 2023 due to a tear in an oblique muscle, has dropped down to 125 in the men's rankings. The Australian Open runs from Jan. 14-28.

Iran facing Greco-Roman 77kg dilemma after Abdi's setback in Zagreb



Iranian 77kg wrestler Amir Abdi (blue) is seen in action in last December's Greco-Roman National Championships. ● IWF

Sports Desk

Iran's Greco-Roman head coach Hassan Rangraz is left with questions about who will be the country's 77kg wrestler at the upcoming Olympic qualifiers after Amir Abdi's early exit in the Zagreb Open Ranking Series event. With three-time world bronze medalist Mohammad-Ali Geraei serving a one-year ban by the UWW, Abdi looked to be the favorite to lead the line for Iran in chasing an Olympic berth following a gold-winning run in December's National Championships. However, a first-round 11-3 hammering by the host's Antonio

Kamenjasevic in the Croatian capital on Friday cast major doubts over his credentials for a place in April's Asian Olympic qualifiers in Bishkek. Abdi will be given a second chance in March's Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre tournament in Antalya, Turkey, where he will be joined by fellow-Iranian Amin Kavianejad, who won a silver in the Asian Games last October, in the 77kg contests, with the best of the two securing a place in the Kyrgyz capital event. Iran has already guaranteed four Greco-Roman quotas for next summer's Paris Olympics – courtesy of medal-winning campaigns by Amin Mirzazadeh, Moham-

madreza Geraei, and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, as well as Mahdi Mohsennejad's 60kg fifth-place in last year's World Championships – with the 77kg, and 87kg slots still up for grabs. Mirzazadeh defeated Turkish great Riza Kayaalp for the 130kg gold, while reigning Olympic champion Geraei and Saravi left Belgrade with a couple of consolation bronzes in the 67kg and 97kg competitions respectively. Alireza Mohmadi – an 82kg silver winner in Belgrade – will likely be the Iranian 87kg contestant at the Asian qualifiers, thanks to his victory over Nasser Alizadeh in the national final followed by a Zagreb Open silver.

Abdi will be given a second chance in March's Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre tournament along with fellow-Iranian Amin Kavianejad.

Guardiola praises 'legend' De Bruyne's instant spark for City's title tilt

THE GUARDIAN – Pep Guardiola welcomed Kevin De Bruyne back to Premier League combat from a five-month absence and, after watching his playmaker turn potential defeat into a 3-2 victory at Newcastle, suggested the Belgian could turn the title race Manchester City's way. After stepping off the bench midway through the second half with City trailing 2-1 at St James' Park, De Bruyne swiftly equalised before creating Oscar Bobb's stoppage time winner. "Kevin is a legend," said Guardiola, whose second-placed side are now only two points behind Liverpool, the leaders. "He is loved by our people and, hopefully, in the last months he can help us be there to the end." City have, by their lofty standards, struggled at times since De Bruyne

injured a hamstring in August, necessitating surgery. "We need players like Kevin," said Guardiola, who will be without his key striker, Erling Haaland, until next month. "We need him to do something special in the final third. That is not tactical ability but talent, individual talent. "I think everybody agrees we made a really good performance today against such a physical team in Newcastle. They made good transitions and, after taking the lead [through Bernardo Silva], we conceded two goals but after that talent made the difference. At half-time I told the players: 'You are amazing, stick together and we will do it.' "It was really important to win because Liverpool are flying and we have to go to Anfield so it's better to be close



Kevin De Bruyne (R) scores Manchester City's second goal in a 3-2 victory over Newcastle United in St James' Park, Newcastle, Britain, on January 13, 2024. ● SCOTT HEPPELL/REUTERS

the them." It left Eddie Howe frustrated and his injury-hit side stuck in 10th after a run of six defeats in seven league games. "We have so

much promise, so much good about us but to be sat here with nothing is very painful for the players," said Newcastle's manager after seeing Alexander Isak and

Anthony Gordon score fine goals. "The first half was everything we wanted to be. We want to be front-foot but, in the second half, we couldn't manage that."

Muslim division allows Israeli crimes: Raisi



National Desk

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Sunday branded a "lack of unity among Muslim nations" as one of the main reasons that had emboldened Israel to commit crimes against the people of Palestine in the Gaza Strip. "If the Islamic nations had been united, would have we witnessed such massacres and injustice against the oppressed people of Palestine?" Raisi told the International Conference of Al-Aqsa Storm and the Awakening of Human

Conscience in Tehran on Sunday, IRNA reported. He made the comments on the 100th day of the ongoing Israeli aggression against Gaza, which has killed nearly 24,000 Palestinians, flattened large areas of the coastal enclave and displaced hundreds of thousands. Raisi warned that Israel's normalization of ties with some Arab countries would neither bring about security for the Zionist regime nor regional states. Referring to the role of the US as Israel's main supporter

in the war against Gaza, he said Washington's "military, financial, and political support" had paved the way for Tel Aviv's atrocities in Gaza. "This proves that the main axis of evil is the United States and that the Zionist regime [of Israel] is acting as executive arm for the US and its allies," Raisi added. He said efforts aimed at portraying "those defending their homeland as evil" had failed. "It has become clear to the world that the center of all mischief is the United States

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi addresses the International Conference of Al-Aqsa Storm and Awakening of Human Conscience in Tehran on January 14, 2024. president.ir

and some Western states that are supporting the Israeli regime," Raisi pointed out. The president reiterated that Palestine was the foremost issue of the Muslim world, saying the liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Al-Quds was a priority for the Muslim world.

100 days of Gaza war 'staining our shared humanity': UN

International Desk

A top UN official has said that the war in Gaza was staining humanity, as the conflict in the besieged territory moved into its 100th day. "The massive death, destruction, displacement, hunger, loss and grief of the last 100 days are staining our shared humanity," the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, said in a statement on Saturday as he visited the Gaza Strip. In response to Hamas's deadly October 7 attack on southern Israel which resulted in about 1,140 deaths, Israel has pounded Gaza, killing at least 23,968 people, mostly women and children, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza. Lazzarini said an entire generation of children were being "traumatized" and would take years to heal. "People live in inhumane conditions, where diseases are spreading, including among children," he said. "They live through the unlivable, with the clock ticking fast towards famine." Meanwhile, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in a press conference with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry in Cairo, called Sunday for the establishment of a Palestinian state and a cease-fire in Gaza.



solution to the Palestinian cause by ending the (Israeli) occupation and establishing an independent, contiguous Palestinian state," a joint statement said. The Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank, seat of the Palestinian Authority, are separated by Israeli territory. Both were seized by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Pro-Palestinian marches

In the US, thousands of demonstrators converged opposite the White House on Saturday to call for an end to Israeli military action in Gaza, while children joined a pro-Palestinian march through central London as part of a global-day-of-action against the longest and deadliest war between Israel and Palestinians in 75 years. People in the US capital held aloft signs questioning President Joe Biden's viability as a presidential candidate because of his staunch support for Israel. Vendors were also selling South African flags as protesters chanted slogans in support of the country

whose accusations of genocide against Israel prompted the International Court of Justice in the Hague, Netherlands, to take up the case. In a defiant speech Saturday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel will pursue its war against Hamas until victory and will not be stopped by anyone, including the world court. After the US and Germany, the Canadian, and British leaders also rejected the premise of ICJ genocide case against Israel. Namibia, a southern African country where the first genocide of the 20th century took place under German colonial rule, rejected Germany's support of the genocidal intent of "the racist regime" of Israel, Namibia's presidency said in a statement late Saturday. Lamenting "Germany's inability to draw lessons from its horrific history," Namibian President Hage Geingob expressed "deep concern" for the German government's announcement Friday that it "rejected the morally upright indictment brought forward by South Africa."

Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for Tetra Sodium Pyrophosphate (TSP) // 15000 kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of Diatomite for ABS production plant. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until February 3, 2024. Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: February 19, 2024. Email: me.rahimi@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-21-88737355#109

Tender	No	Quantity
Tetra Sodium Pyrophosphate (TSP)	PVS-0241053	15000kg

Public Relations of Tabriz Petrochemical Company (Public Stock)

Published : January 15, 2024

Call for int'l peace summit

Shoukry and Wang called for "an international summit for peace to find a just, comprehensive and lasting

Rask assault terrorists arrested

IRNA - Iran's Police Chief Ahmadreza Radan said security forces arrested four main assailants involved in a terrorist assault on Rask County's police headquarters in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. Radan said the terrorists were captured during an operation carried out by counter-terrorism police units over the past few days.

Two reporters jailed during last year unrest freed

Iran on Sunday released two female journalists who had been arrested during the 2022 unrest. Niloufar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi, serving seven years and six years in jail, respectively, were released on bail. In October, they were found guilty of collaboration with the US among other charges.

Yemeni envoy: US, UK attacks illegal

International Desk

Yemen's ambassador to Iran says the United States and Britain illegally launched attacks on the Arab country with the aim of preventing Yemen from supporting Palestinians. Ebrahim Al-Dailami said in an interview with ISNA that the US has been seeking to obtain permission from the United Nations to attack Yemen, but it has failed to do so. As everyone knows, he noted, the United Nations has not granted any permission to the US and UK to launch an attack on Yemen, but the two countries used a recent resolution adopted by the UN Security Council as a pretext for

their aggression on Yemen. The UN Security Council on January 10, 2024, passed the Resolution 2722, condemning Yemen's attacks on merchant and commercial vessels and called for the Ansarallah movement to immediately cease all attacks on vessels and to release the captured ship Galaxy Leader and its crew. However, the Yemeni official underlined that his country will continue its attacks on the Israel-bound ships to support Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which have been under brutal Israeli aggression since October 7, 2023. "The Americans seek to expand the scope of the war across the region, and

we have already warned them to avoid any foolish act," Al-Deilami said, adding, "The United States is responsible for whatever may happen in the Red Sea." A US-led coalition has launched two deadly strikes on the Arab country in the past week, which has been met with condemnations from regional states. The Yemeni official proposed the formation of a regional coalition to protect the security of the strategic sea. He said that the US has been seeking to create an international coalition in the Red Sea, but has failed to do so as the littoral states refused to join it.

Second Announcement

N.I.S.O.C
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0040002

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
27	PARTS FOR "WENZEL" HYDRAULIC FISHING JAR 3-3/8 IN. OD., 1-1/2 IN. ID., 2-3/8 API IF CONN. VALVE MANDREL HOUSING	135 NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 35,204/23 EURO or 15,043,543,818 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials through technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: www.nisoc.ir-material-procurement-management-tab. ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P.

NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL.

NOTE: Based on enactment issued by Nisoc's Tender committee, foreign companies must submit a Bid Bond Guarantee amounting to aforementioned (paragraph 1)Euro amount. Otherwise, their quotations will not be considered.

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex, Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 4644
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Iranian researcher wins Kuwait medical prize



Social Desk

Iranian epidemiologist and university professor Davood Khalili was honored with the 2023 State of Kuwait Prize for the Control of Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The award recognizes Khalili's significant contributions to combating cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, as reported by Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, IRNA wrote.

Khalili, affiliated with the institute of glandular sciences at Shahid Beheshti University, specializes in researching the prevention of metabolic diseases.

The prestigious prize, supported by the Kuwaiti government, is presented annually by the World Health Organization's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office to individuals who have made important advances in the prevention, control, or research of the aforementioned health conditions.

Fereydoun Azizi, the director of Iran's Institute for Endocrine Sciences, and Afshin Ostovar, a professor at Tehran University of Medical Science, won the same award in 2007 and 2002, respectively.

Khalili emphasized the vital role of organizations like the World Health Organization in addressing prevalent diseases worldwide.

He underscored the importance of their mission to combat common illnesses and enhance public health globally. Plus, he highlighted the WHO's regional offices, including the Eastern Mediterranean region, which annually awards scientists, researchers, and specialists for their noteworthy contributions in the field.

Khalili is focusing on predictive models for cardiovascular diseases and identifying high-risk individuals in both Iran and the world.

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Maragheh: 'Fossil paradise' of 10 million years old

When Nikolai Khanykov tripped over a bevy of rocks in Maragheh in 1840 that intrigued him to send a small collection to Russia for examination, what he had in his mind is anybody's guess. Posted as general consul in nearby Tabriz, Khanykov was at the spearhead of the Russian Cause in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Persia, and Afghanistan, pushing ahead the Oriental activities of Russian imperial diplomacy and the military, Press TV reported. He spent his last 18 years in France where he published an overwhelming majority of his findings, rousing the curiosity of globetrotting fortune hunters of the West such as German mineralogist Hermann Abich who studied the Maragheh fauna in the latter half of the 19th century. Domestic enterprisers were no less tantalized. In 1884, a merchant from Tabriz invited Austrian paleontologist H. Pohlrig to visit the locality. Two years later, Pohlrig had made the first comprehensive collection of the Maragheh Basin, sampling fossils from nearly all sections which are currently held in the Natural History Museum of Vienna.

Two other Austrian paleontologists visited Maragheh later and made an extensive collection of fossils, selling some to the British Museum of Natural History in

London. However, it was the French who made an expedition at a very grand scale to Maragheh in 1904, employing local laborers to excavate a large sample of fossils from the locality and ship them to the Museum of Natural History in Paris.

Over the next century, other expeditions occurred by teams from the US, Japan, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands which scoured every nook and cranny and took away whatever they could from their excavations.

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran's Department of the Environment (DOE) and National Museum of Natural History (MMT) sponsored new excavations in the area, which resulted in the nomination of 10 km² of the Maragheh fossiliferous area as a national protected zone and the establishment of a field museum and research station in the area.

In 2015, Iran repatriated 1,500 fossils dating back to nine million years ago from the United States after a long battle. They had been discovered in Maragheh by paleontologists from Harvard University and transported to the US a year before the Islamic Revolution.

Today, the area has the highest environmental protection level,



Chilotherium persiae found in Iran - Miocene, 8 mya, Museum of Natural History, Paris

where eight research excavations have been carried out over the past years and nearly 2,000 unique fossils of vertebrate animals such as elephants, giraffes, saber tooth bears, cows, deer, rhinoceros and horses have been obtained.

Elephant tusks, the skull, jaw and movement organs of animals are among the fossils discovered in the excavations.

"Geological and paleontological research shows that these animals are the ancestors of today's animals in Africa," said Gholamreza Zare, the head of the Maragheh Environmental Protection Department.

In July 2021, the DOE director in Iran's East Azarbaijan Province announced that two mammoth tusks dating back to 15 million years ago had been discovered in Maragheh.

Last October, provincial officials announced that some 400 fossils of 10 million-year-old creatures

had been discovered in the village of Ahagh near Maragheh.

Maragheh is considered one of the three most preeminent Late Miocene faunas in western Eurasia along with those of Samos in China and Pikermi in Greece.

Compared with Pikermi and Samos, Maragheh is viewed a true "Lagerstätte" or deposit because of the sheer abundance and diversity of its fauna. It is unique among the three classical faunas in its clear layer-cake stratigraphy with several, laterally continuous volcanic ashes that are readily amenable to radioisotopic dating.

Investigations have revealed that the Maragheh fauna spans from a range of 9.5 to 6.5 million years and presents an especial correlation with that of Saloniki in Greece and Mt. Luberon in France in addition to Samos and Pikermi, comprising the so-called Pontian mammals' communities.

Also referred as the "Maragheh

fossil paradise" by paleontologists, the area in northwest Iran is one of the most unique geosites around the world whose specimens answer to important questions about mammals evolution. Replete with outcrops of unique mammal fossils, such as ancient elephants, rhinos, giraffes, mastodons, extinct three-toed hipparion horses, etc., findings from the region can be applied to understand paleoenvironments and model and forecast weather and climate changes.

Research on fossil paleo diet indicates grazing, feeding, and browsing among an abundance of mixed taxa in the area, suggesting Maragheh nurtured a significantly wooded environment.

Today, it is among 12 Iranian cities with a background of being a capital and one of the 10 cities with the largest number of historical monuments, but its plot of dominantly bushy vegetation is empty of any wooded setting.



The fossil of rhino kept at Maragheh Natural Museum

Domestic cancer radiopharmaceutical unveiled

Iran achieves 99% self-sufficiency in pharmaceutical production

Social Desk

Heidar Mohammadi, the head of Iran's Food and Drug Administration (IFDA), highlighted the country's self-sufficiency in meeting its health needs domestically and emphasized the importance of supporting technology-based companies. In addition, he announced the introduction of radiopharmaceuticals, an effective cancer treatment drug, ISNA wrote. Mohammadi made these remarks during the opening ceremony of the second ex-

hibition of technology-based products in the field of food, medicine, and medical equipment, titled 'Health-Based 2', being held from January 14 to 16.

He noted that a significant part of the products from technology-based firms is being unveiled for the first time at this exhibition.

Mohammadi stated, "This year, the exhibition begins with a growth of over 100% compared to last year due to the presence of technology-based companies, with approxi-

mately 200 such companies participating. The increase reflects the growing interest and development of technology-based initiatives in the health sector."

He added, "Last Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2022, to March 20, 2023), around 21% of drugs were valued over \$1 million, of which 10% surpassed \$3 million. As we move towards developing technology-based firms, production increases, and overall costs decrease. Our policy is to support these enterprises to enhance

production." Mohammadi highlighted Iran's transformation by achieving pharmaceutical self-sufficiency, stating, "Before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, only 20% of the country's needs were met by domestic companies, and the rest were imports or produced by multinational companies. However, today, 99% of the country's pharmaceutical needs are met domestically." He emphasized the significance of connecting universities with industries, noting that Iran has approximately



12,000 pharmaceutical students who need to be connected to the industry. "With the support of government, we hope to witness technological growth and development in the country, achieving complete self-sufficiency in the

health sector soon," he said. The head of the IFDA underscored that the exhibition would feature the unveiling of 11 pieces of medical equipment and 12 pharmaceuticals, including one traditional medicine.