

Iranian benefactor: Charity work inspiring, exhilarating



By Mahdiyeh Qazvinian
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

Generous benefactors seek to do good by donating money to needy people, charities, and nonprofit institutions. They do so without the expectation of being reimbursed or getting something in return. Benefactors may have several reasons to give away their money, the most important of which pertain to serving people and expressing gratitude to God. Davoud Seiquali is one of these benefactors who has spared no effort to help people in need. He has built several schools because of his love and interest in education. Iran Daily has conducted an interview with him. Here are the excerpts of the interview.

Please introduce yourself to the readers of our news paper. I was born in 1968. I am married and I have a son. I am retired and live in Tehran. I have been engaged in charity activities since 2000 and I am currently the CEO of Zahir Charity.

What is the most important duty of a benefactor? Benefactors should encourage people to get engaged in charitable work. I am not a rich man but do my best to motivate people to turn to philanthropic work.

Has your family ever complained about your charitable activities? Never, my wife and my son have always stood by me. Charity work does not generate revenues for those who are engaged in that. I am a disabled war veteran of the Iraqi chemical weapons attacks (the Iraqi imposed war in the 1980s) but do my best with regards to charity work.

Have you ever thought about giving up philanthropic work? Never. In my point of view a benefactor never retires. I do not consider myself a benefactor. I am just active in spiritual affairs. By the time

Davoud Seiquali, benefactor



I am alive, I will continue my path.

Which groups or people do you support? I provide support for disabled and sick people, female-headed families and those who are in prison over financial problems. I also make efforts to generate jobs. As the saying goes "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime."

Please tell our readers about your sweet and bitter memories? I would prefer to narrate my sweet memories. Once I was in a taxi and had a phone call with a woman who was the head of a household. When the driver realized who I was talking to, he gave me all his daily profits and demanded that I donate the money to that woman. Another sweet memory pertains to the time that our charity institute managed to save a man who had been sentenced to death. The insti-

tute paid the blood money and the convict was freed. When he was released, he became a member of a charity group. My bitter memory pertains to the Covid-19 pandemic, during which I lost some of my colleagues.

Your charity activities have appealed to you. Which one has been extremely appealing? Our charity institute built a school in Pakdasth (a neighborhood in the southeast of the capital Tehran) which was an exhilarating experience and hugely enjoyable. This is because I believe when a school opens a prison is shut. When I saw students at the school at the beginning of the academic year, I was further motivated and inspired to press ahead with charity activities. We seek to focus our charity activities on job generation. We hope we will be able to establish a clinic in a deprived region and purchase modern medical equipment to offer free of charge services to underprivileged people.

Drug shortage on the horizon A wake up call for authorities

Social Desk

Iran's healthcare system is facing a drug shortage crisis that requires urgent attention from the government. The scarcity of drugs, particularly during the latter half of the previous Iranian calendar year, is still fresh in people's minds. The Ministry of Health had to resort to importing drugs such as antibiotics from India, despite Iran's long-standing production of such medicines. The pharmaceutical industry in Iran viewed the imports as a disgrace, and the society did not benefit much from them. Although the crisis was supposed to end last year, it still persists, and it seems that the budget assigned for medicine and medical equipment this year may not be enough to address it.

The budget allocation of 69 trillion tomans, which is more than \$2.4 billion, is expected to create issues for the industry and the people. Mohammad Abdehzadeh, the head of the Board of Directors of the Iranian Pharmaceutical Industries Syndicate (IPIS), warned that starting from May, Iran shall witness an exponential dearth of drugs in the country. The shortage of drugs and serum is already affecting the ailing society, and the situation is likely to worsen in the coming months if it remains unattended.

The head of the Iranian parliamentary Health Commission, Hossein-Ali Shahriari, has expressed concerns about the country's pharmaceutical market. He says the government's pharmaceutical plan, which was supposed to help people obtain medicine more conveniently, has backfired and increased out-of-pocket payments for patients, forcing them to purchase medication at several times the price. He also highlights the negative impact of high exchange rates on imported medicine and medical equipment. Shahriari has communicated his concerns to the minister of health and the president through personal interactions

and written correspondence. A high-level meeting has been planned, bringing together macroeconomic officials, the speaker of the Parliament, the minister of health, and all members of the Health Com-

In a letter addressed to President Ebrahim Raeisi, Shahriari has expressed concerns about the critical issue of drug scarcity in the country. Shahriari highlights the dwindling stock of pharmaceutical raw mate-



MEHR

mittee of the Parliament, to explore viable solutions. The high costs of medicine and the negative impact high exchange rates on imported medications are significant issues that need to be addressed urgently. The meeting presents an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss practical solutions to the country's pharmaceutical market problems. Fatemeh Mohammad-Beigi, a member of the Parliament's Health Committee, has expressed concerns about the insufficient budget allocation for medicine and medical equipment in the current Iranian year. The budget bill has allocated only 69 trillion tomans (\$2.4 billion), which falls short by 35 trillion tomans (nearly \$1.3 billion) from the country's required medical finance. Despite appeals from various organizations, including the Health Ministry to increase the budget allocation, no additional funds have been considered. Mohammad-Beigi emphasizes that inadequate funding for healthcare will adversely affect public health, and officials need to address the pharmaceutical issues seriously. The lack of action poses a serious threat to public health and may trigger a chain of problems, she warns.

rials in the local factories and companies due to the current circumstances. Members of the IPIS Board of Directors have echoed this concern in a recent press conference, stating that the local drug production plants possess only a three-to-six-month supply of raw materials. Shahriari's letter to the president emphasizes the necessity of increasing the drug budget from \$2.4 billion to approximately \$3.7 billion. He also stresses the urgent need to address the claims of medical centers, pharmacies, and distribution companies, ensure timely provision and distribution of subsidized forex currency among manufacturers and suppliers, and promptly pay the government's debt to insurance companies to revitalize the central artery of the country's pharmaceutical supply chain. Given the gravity of the situation and the significance of ensuring the accessibility of strategic commodities such as medicine, it would behoove the government to heed the warnings voiced by those engaged in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the Parliament's Health Committee, regarding the looming crisis of drug scarcity in the forthcoming months.

PIC OF THE DAY



ISNA

An African white lioness kept in Shahid Chamran Park in Karaj, Alborz Province, has given birth to four cubs. This was the second delivery of the lioness. Dena and Hira, the white lioness and lion, were brought to Iran from South Africa three years ago. White lions are endangered animals and the birth of the quadruplets in Karaj Park is considered an important and promising event in the field of wildlife.