

As country battles 5.5-fold increase in obesity rates,

Iran makes strides in bariatric surgery



Social Desk

The director of the obesity clinic at Rasoul Akram Hospital, Dr. Shahab Sha-

habi, has underscored the potential of bariatric surgery to treat not only obesity but also related health complications. He esti-

mates that approximately four million Iranians are in need of this life-altering procedure. Shahabi highlighted the

escalating global obesity epidemic, and noted that advancements in laparoscopic bariatric surgery, which began in earnest

from 2000 onwards, have been swift and significant, particularly in the realm of surgical equipment and techniques, ISNA

reported.

Gastric bypass and other weight-loss surgeries – known collectively as bariatric surgery – involve making changes to your digestive system to help you lose weight. Bariatric surgery is done when diet and exercise haven't worked or when you have serious health problems because of your weight.

"Iran has made substantial strides in bariatric surgery in recent years," Shahabi said. "We have pioneered several new surgical techniques in this field."

Shahabi emphasized the importance of research and evidence-based practice in all areas of medical science, including bariatric surgery. He stressed that obesity often leads to serious health issues such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, fatty liver disease, sleep apnea, and back pain, all of which can be mitigated through successful bariatric surgery.

As a faculty member of Iran University of Medical Sciences, Shahabi point-

ed out that obesity is a global issue and a leading cause of death, which is preventable. He cited Ministry of Health statistics indicating that two-thirds of Iranians are either overweight or obese, a figure that has increased 5.5-fold over the past four decades.

Regarding insurance coverage for bariatric surgery, Shahabi explained that in Iran, the procedure is covered for individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above. However, he noted that the International Federation of Bariatric Surgery lowered the BMI threshold for surgery to 35 in its 2022 constitution, reflecting the procedure's proven effectiveness.

When asked about the reversibility of bariatric surgery, Shahabi stated, "Depending on the surgical method used, there is a 10-30 percent chance of obesity recurrence, primarily due to lifestyle changes. It is crucial that patients modify their lifestyle post-surgery."

Tehran's network of beggars, working children should be confronted



Social Desk

The CEO of Tehran Municipality's Social Services and Partnerships Organization, Ahmad Ahmadi Sadr, has issued a stern call to action for responsible institutions to address the pervasive issue of child labor and begging networks in the city. This plea comes amid growing concerns over the exploitation of children's financial vulnerability and familial poverty by unscrupulous profiteers.

In a recent interview with a radio broadcast, Ahmadi Sadr lamented the current state of child labor and street organization in Tehran. He highlighted the unfortunate reality that children are often coerced into these illicit networks due to a variety of factors, including the exploitation of their families' financial hardships. Despite the fact that child labor is deemed illegal, Ahmadi Sadr noted that the punitive measures in place are insufficient to deter these practices.

Ahmadi Sadr referenced a report by the parliament's research center, stating that the State Welfare Organization has attempted to prevent working of the children 32 times. However, he argued that without stringent laws and with Tehran's open-door policy towards neighboring cities and countries seeking to profit from the street economy, "These efforts are doomed to fail, even if the plan is implemented 320 times."

The official further criticized the lack of a unified management system to address social damage in Tehran. He expressed frustration at the repeated implementation of the prevention plan, which has been attempted 32 times, yet the problem persists.

Ahmadi Sadr revealed that the Tehran Municipality has proposed a plan to the relevant organizations and institutions. He clarified that while it is not the Municipality's responsibility to organize labor children, they have nonetheless presented a plan aimed at identifying talent, empowering, and educating these children.

He concluded by urging that the network of beggars and child labor profiteers be confronted with the seriousness it deserves, once and for all.

Bookshop to replace a restaurant in Tehran: An auspicious oddity

Social Desk

The prominent Shafaq Book House, which had temporarily ceased its operations in Tehran's Sa'adat Abad neighborhood, is set to resume activities at its new location on Valiasr Street according to manager Mohammad-Taqi Haqbin.

Haqbin revealed that the store had been searching for a suitable new space since April, after the building's owner requested they vacate the premises. The 370-square-meter site on Valiasr Street, formerly occupied by a restaurant chain for 15 years, proved to be an ideal location, IBNA reported.

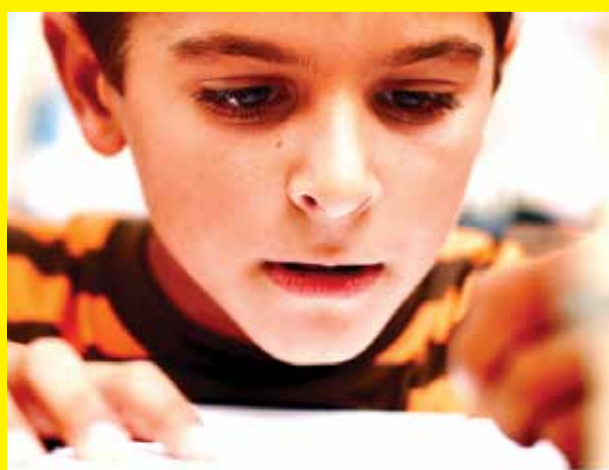
Commenting on the unusual nature of a bookstore replacing a restaurant in Iran, Haqbin noted that it is more common for bookstores to be converted into eateries or cafes. He added that preparations are already underway to equip the new Shafaq Book House location, with a grand reopening celebration for book lovers scheduled by the end of July.

Haqbin also underscored the importance of government support for the new generation of bookstores, calling for special facilities and assistance to ensure their continued success amid increasing operational expenses such as water, electricity, and gas. He pointed out that older generation booksellers often own their store locations, while younger booksellers must contend with additional rental costs.

Lastly, Haqbin provided an update on the expansion of bookstore space in the country, with an estimated 5,000 square meters being added to storefronts this year through the efforts of private sector activists.



IBNA



American kids' math ability has gone backward by decades

American 13-year-olds continue to struggle academically in the wake of the pandemic, especially in mathematics, according to official data out recently.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project that has been monitoring test scores since 1969, tested students in late 2022, finding reading and math scores significantly dropped compared to late 2019, according to Agence France-Presse. Average math scores have risen

significantly since the assessments first began, but have now dropped to levels last seen in 1990, with declines more pronounced among lower-performing students.

"US students are struggling across the board. Educators, policymakers, and families need to work together urgently and decisively to address this generation's learning needs," said Beverly Perdue, National Assessment Governing Board chair.

The assessment, which relies on nationally representative samples, revealed several additional concerns, including that the number of 13-year-olds who said they read for fun hit an all-time low. Just 14 percent read for fun every day, down three points from 2020 and 13 points from 2012.

Among lower-performing students, 42 percent said they never or hardly ever read for fun. Absenteeism was also up, with the percentage of students who

missed five or more days doubling since the last assessment. Research has shown shuttering schools during COVID-19 lockdowns hit those from lower-income families and ethnic minorities the hardest.

The pandemic also worsened learning outcomes, including increases in students seeking mental health services, school violence and disruption, cyberbullying, and nationwide teacher and staff shortages.