

First Iranian Music Night held in Riyadh

Arts & Culture Desk

In a cultural initiative aimed at improving ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Iranian Ambassador to Riyadh Alireza Enayati, expressed hope for diverse cultural programs in the future. He made the statement during the Iranian Music Night held in Riyadh on February 15, IRNA wrote. The cultural event marks the first of its kind organized by the Iranian Embassy in Riyadh, coinciding with the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Enayati talked about the significance of arts and culture, adding that both countries have a lot of cultural and re-

ligious commonalities. "Cultural weeks, music nights, film screenings, and literary events are usual cultural activities hosted by embassies or cultural representatives during national occasions", the envoy said. Over the past four decades, Iran has consistently organized special cultural, and religious programs, particularly during the national and Islamic celebrations, he added. These events have always been welcomed by official authorities, local citizens, diplomats from other countries, and Iranians residing abroad. The musical ensemble "Soroush Molana," sponsored

by the Iranian Embassy in Riyadh, performed pieces of traditional Iranian music at the Palace of Culture amphitheater in Riyadh. He stressed the "richness of Iranian arts and culture", expressing hope for a future filled with diverse cultural programs between the two countries. Led by tar virtuoso Hossein Sojoudi, the ensemble staged a repertoire of 10 Iranian musical pieces. Abbas Rahbarnia was the vocalist of the program and Ali Kheshtinejad staged pieces on tar and kamancheh (an Iranian spiked fiddle). Mohammad Sarbaz also performed some daf (Persian frame drum) pieces.



Isfahan unveils tourist map catering to Chinese visitors



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A specialized tourist map of Isfahan has been unveiled in both Chinese and English languages on the sidelines of the 17th International Exhibition of Tourism and Related Industries in Tehran. The map's design includes symbols, signs, and colors tailored to the preferences of Chinese visitors, ISNA reported. Alireza Massah, the head of the tourism department of the cultural, social, and sport organization of Isfahan Municipality explained, "The map is designed to match the preferences of Chinese visitors, using elements such as miniature arts with designs from various historical periods and carefully chosen colors appealing to the Chinese taste." On the motivation behind publishing the map in Chinese, Massah pointed out that nearly 60,000 Chinese tourists have visited Isfahan since the beginning of the current Iranian year (from March 21, 2023), according to the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism

Department in Isfahan Province. He added that there has been a lack of corresponding content in Chinese, prompting the plan to introduce the key attractions of Isfahan in a map. Massah added, "The printed version of this map serves as a unique souvenir of Isfahan due to its special design. The content of the map will be available on the Chinese Baidu search engine in the next phase." According to the head of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department in Isfahan Province, Hamidreza Mohaqeqian, printed copies of the map will be distributed to airline agencies, hotels, and tourist offices representing Iran in China, aiming to provide Chinese tourists and travelers with easy access to information about Isfahan. Mohaqeqian also talked about the significance of the Chinese tourist market, adding, "Considering the number of foreign tourists entering Isfahan, Chinese tourists rank first among international visitors choosing Isfahan as their travel destination."

Lawmaker: 97% of medical needs produced domestically despite sanctions

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Despite sanctions, 97% of the country's pharmaceutical needs are domestically produced. The restrictions on pharmaceuticals imposed by the United States violate human rights internationally in Iran, said a member of Health and Medical Commission of Iranian Parliament. In an interview with Iran Daily reporter, Fatemeh Mohammadbeigi urged for "modernization" in the country's pharmaceutical industry. She emphasized that sanctions have created challenges in the supply of essential raw materials for pharmaceutical companies and the modernization of drug production lines in the country. The Parliament member added that although the latest and most advanced drug production machinery is available globally, Iran faces difficulties importing even a single required device due to imposed sanctions. "This situation significantly impacts the quality and pricing of the finished pharmaceutical products." She highlighted. She stated that the 3% percent of medications which are not produced domestically, create many problems because they include vital medications for refractory diseases. Mohammadbeigi said although Iran's pharmaceutical productions are being exported to some countries, the current priority is to meet domestic market demands. The government has been proactive in ensuring the country's "pharmaceutical self-sufficiency", she said. She emphasized the importance of giving more attention

to knowledge-based companies in improving drug production quality and exports. Many such companies have been established in the country, employing numerous young and talented researchers, requiring government support and facilitation. Regarding the management of pharmaceutical companies, Mohammadbeigi urged better examination by government and regulatory teams. Attention should be given to the composition of the boards of directors in these companies to prevent malpractices, hoarding, and price manipulation. One of the country's pharmaceutical challenges, according to Mohammadbeigi, is the pricing of pharmaceutical items and tariff

discussions for pharmaceutical services. The rise of online platforms for buying and selling drugs has led to "market imbalances", she notified. Despite efforts by the Health and Treatment Commission and the Electronic Health Committee, illicit drug trading outside the health system continues. Mohammadbeigi stressed the need for stricter surveillance mechanisms, strong regulatory actions against offenders, and the prevention of any misconduct. She highlighted the importance of comprehensive management and determination in organizing the pharmaceutical market in the country. Mohammadbeigi urged all offi-

cials and organizations to share the responsibility, emphasizing that it should not only rest on the Health Ministry. To this end, the Health and Treatment Commission organized sessions with officials from the Central Bank, Health Ministry, and the Plan and Budget Organization to address budgetary and currency shortcomings in drug supply and production. Mohammadbeigi called for the country's banking system to provide "low-interest facilities" for the renovation of pharmaceutical production lines. In terms of raw material supply for pharmaceutical companies, she urged custom offices to speed up the clearance process, as delays in clearing pharmaceutical raw materials can slow down production lines and affect drug circulation, leaving people in need without essential medications, she explained.

