

ing air quality issues and is crucial for further progress. This line of credit, non-existent in previous years, has facilitated the dedication of 320 billion Tomans two years ago and 840 billion Tomans last year. Although these figures pale in comparison to the scope of work required, this important initial step creates a solid foundation for future budgetary allocations.

Another groundbreaking development is the formulation of the country's first climate change management plan. Following the Seventh Plan Law, Note 1 to Article 21 of the Climate Change Management Plan Law was devised. Ad-

ressing climate change has far-reaching implications that transcend air pollution concerns, as the entire nation's infrastructure and activities are susceptible to its impacts. It is crucial to build resilience and transition to a green and low-carbon economy to prevent irreparable damage.

The Islamic Council approved the climate change management program, emphasizing four critical goals: strengthening adaptation, reducing vulnerability, expanding the green economy, and fostering low-carbon industries. The urgency of this plan cannot be overstated, as current cli-

mate-driven disasters like floods are causing significant human and financial losses. Developing strategies to mitigate soil erosion and safeguard food production are essential components of combating desertification. Successfully addressing climate change necessitates sustained and collaborative efforts.

Climate change impacts, such as altered rainfall patterns, often catch us off guard due to a lack of preparedness. With 94% of global food production reliant on soil, mitigating the consequences of floods on soil quality and agricultural lands is paramount to prevent widespread food production challenges and increased deserti-

fication. A comprehensive plan to manage the impacts of climate change is vital, requiring continuous and collective action.

Setting limits for odor pollution

Another notable accomplishment is the establishment of permissible odor limits, a first for the country. These standards were drafted, approved, and released, providing a much-needed guideline that was previously absent. For instance, complaints about unpleasant smells from industrial and non-industrial activities along the Tehran-Qom highway or near Imam Khomeini Airport can now be addressed more effectively.

These odors stem from a combination of factors, such as untreated sewage, livestock farms, slaughterhouses, and landfills like Aradkooch or Kahrizak.

With these new guidelines, permissible limits for odor-producing gases or odorous gases can be determined, enabling authorities to assess whether the smell is annoying or not. Industries can be monitored based on these standards, ensuring that emissions remain within acceptable levels and do not cause discomfort. While odor pollution may not have direct health impacts, it is important to manage as it contributes to overall air quality and public well-being.

Under Raisi's presidency

Iran's health system forever transformed for the better

PERSPECTIVE

Amidst the coronavirus pandemic, Iran's government, led by the late president Ebrahim Raisi, achieved significant milestones in various sectors, notably transforming the nation's health system. During the early days of Raisi's tenure, which started on August 3, 2021, the country was still grappling with the effects of the pandemic, but the government's swift procurement and distribution of vaccines turned the tide, ensuring the safety of countless citizens.

Within a brief five-month period after the administration took charge, over 131 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were imported into the country. According to data released by the customs and the Food and Drug Organization, Iran's vaccine imports surged sevenfold within those five months, compared to the entire term of the previous administration. This rapid scale-up in vaccine acquisition was a critical component of Iran's comprehensive efforts to protect its population from the devastating effects of the pandemic.

Nurses were heard this time

Ali Abbasi-Beglo, a board member of the Emergency Medical Association of Iran, highlighted the dedication of Raisi's government to nurses in an interview with Ana news agency. According to Abbasi-Beglo, Raisi's focus on the nation's

health system was evident from the onset of his presidency, as demonstrated by the hiring of over 10,000 nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

He further added that giving merit pay to healthcare workers was among other initiatives prioritized by Raisi's government that reflected its commitment to the well-being of healthcare professionals.

Pharmaceutical breakthroughs

Significant strides were made in the pharmaceutical sector, as confirmed by the head of the Food and Drug Organization, Seyyed Heydar Mohammadi. For example, according to Mohammadi, 17 new drug production lines were launched and several innovative medications were introduced during president Raisi's tenure.

The Darooyar project, another notable development, was first implemented in the Iranian calendar year of 1401 (ended March 20, 2023), paving the way for the domestic production of a range of high-tech medical equipment and supplies, such as linear accelerators, CT scan machines, defibrillators, respiratory ventilators, anesthesia machines, and specialized dialysis machines, along with a variety of required disposables. These advancements were made possible through the dedicated efforts of knowledge-based companies and the support of president Raisi.

Mohammadi emphasized the late president's commitment to bolstering food security and informing the public about healthy foods, which resulted in

tangible improvements by the end of the calendar year of 1402 (ended March 19, 2024). The president's unwavering support for producers of healthcare products and his focus on improving the nation's health were evident in the prioritization of healthcare resources, such as medicine, equipment, and infant formula, as well as his frequent orders to accelerate the provision of financial assistance to the health sector.

Knowledge-based health firms under spotlight

The focus of Raisi's government on knowledge-based companies in the health sector stands out as one of its exceptional accomplishments. Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, vice president for parliamentary affairs in the cabinet of Ebrahim Raisi, underscored the government's dedication to supporting these companies, particularly in medicine and health.

According to Hosseini, previous governments of Iran had not prioritized this area, resulting in a lack of support for knowledge-based companies and their innovative products. However, Raisi's government made a concerted effort to champion the nation's brightest minds and their groundbreaking ideas. In line with this vision, various ministries, including oil, energy, and industry, were mandated to provide backing to their relevant knowledge-based companies. This new emphasis on nurturing Iran's exceptional talent is expected to yield remarkable results, as long as young innovators continue to receive the support they need. The prevailing sentiment is that Iran's success hinges on harnessing the ingenuity of its youth to drive progress and growth.

Health system before, after Raisi

Prior to Raisi's inauguration as president in August 2021, around 19 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been allocated to Iran, with daily fatalities surpassing 700. Following the government's allocation of necessary financial resources, approximately 140 million vaccine doses were secured.

Completing electronic prescription initiative

The implementation of the electronic prescriptions initiative, which was introduced in the calendar year of 1397 (ended March 20, 2019), and the phasing out of paper prescriptions became a top priority for Iran's government under Raisi. This transition gained momentum when the Iran Health



Iran's late president Ebrahim Raisi (R) speaks with doctors and nurses in a hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic.
● ANA

Insurance Organization rolled out the electronic prescription program across 235 cities in November 2019. The pressing need for streamlined healthcare services amidst the coronavirus pandemic further emphasized the significance of the project.

Curbing escalating, unnecessary healthcare costs was another key concern for the country's health authorities. By implementing the electronic prescription program, Iran aimed to integrate various pieces of information, prevent prescription errors, cap service fees, prevent insurance overlaps, and reduce paper consumption. The successful execution of this project would pave the way for the full realization of the family doctor initiative.

According to experts, the current electronic prescribing system has effectively addressed many issues related to paper prescriptions while also reducing healthcare costs, minimizing prescription and medication errors, and enhancing drug therapy and patient well-being.

Boosting hospital capacity

The government of the late president significantly improved Iran's hospital infrastructure with the opening of 106 hospital projects and the addition of 15,939 hospital beds. Comparing his government's achievements to his predecessor's, the Minister of Health pointed out to Hazrat Mahdi (PBUH) Smart Hospital, which now has 1,000 beds, and Ghadir Hospital, which now has 821 beds, as examples.

Saeid Karimi, the deputy director of the Ministry of Health, also emphasized the growth in hospital bed capacity, stating that the number of special beds for infants doubled from 500 to 1,500. Furthermore, 3,000 specialty beds were added to the country's hospital bed capacity during this period.

Iran's booming health tourism industry

Iran has experienced remarkable growth in health tourism over the past two years, attracting a staggering 2.2 million health tourists to the country. With 240 hospitals acquiring IPD licenses to accommodate this influx, the government's commitment to fostering health tourism is evident.

As part of its ongoing strategy, the government intends to introduce a plan under which health advisors will be dispatched to countries that send us the highest numbers of health tourists, further solidifying Iran's position as a premier medical destination.

In addition to these efforts, the Minister of Health highlighted the launch of 53 new public dental centers and the acquisition of 1,000 ambulances during the late president's tenure.

Iran's health infrastructure development in the same period also includes the establishment of 37 pre-hospital emergency bases and four airbases as well as the purchase of 58 ambulances and 20 ambulance buses equipped with 13 mobile beds, contributing to a comprehensive enhancement of the nation's healthcare resources.



Iranian doctors and nurses tend to patients in well-equipped hospitals at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic.
● TASNIM