

Health Ministry unveils 23 pharma products with \$43m import savings

Economy Desk

Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education unveiled on Saturday as many as 23 pharmaceutical products by the Barkat Pharmaceutical Group, which would lead to foreign exchange savings of \$43 million. The products, which were predominantly imported, scarce or unavailable in the past, reached the stage of domestic production and self-sufficiency by leveraging domestic capabilities. The medicines represent a significant step towards increasing patients' access to specialized medicines and reducing dependency on imports, as reported by IRNA. "Today, 23 medicines and vaccines were unveiled, among which the quadrivalent Gardasil vaccine is one of the most important for preventing human papillomavirus disease," Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi said at the ceremony. Highlighting the significant capacity of the Barkat Pharmaceutical Group, Zafarghandi emphasized, "Valuable mea-

asures have been undertaken in the Barakat Pharmaceutical Group. These facilities have provided a suitable opportunity for pharmaceutical companies to develop their activities and investments." "As of today, seven new cancer treatment drugs will enter the market, produced in well-equipped facilities; furthermore, with the efforts witnessed, new drugs in the fields of cardiovascular, neurological, and psychiatric diseases have entered the country's pharmaceutical and health market," Zafarghandi added. According to IRNA, in the field of anti-cancer drugs, medicines such as Gefitinib, Zoledronic Acid, Abiraterone, Plerixafor, Gemcitabine, Regorafenib, and Macitentan have achieved domestic production. Additionally, in the cardiovascular drugs section, Indapamide and Sacubitril/Valsartan drugs have been introduced. In the neurology and psychiatry field, production of equivalents to foreign drugs has commenced. In the supplements and herbal products section,



Iranian Health Minister Mohammad Reza Zafarghandi (2nd L) unveils 23 medicines and vaccines at a ceremony near the capital Tehran on May 31, 2025.

● IRNA

diverse products have been manufactured. In the vaccine sector, the Gardasil vaccine for preventing HPV (Human Papillomavirus) infection has been introduced, which can be effective in reducing the risk of cervical cancer and genital warts. Furthermore, in the cell therapy field, two important products titled "WhartoCell" and "LaViCell" have been developed. According to the report, in the anesthesia and operating room drug category, Ropivacaine and Lubricaine Gel drugs have been produced. Also, two important active pharmaceutical ingredients, Desloratadine and Pregabalin, have been domestically manufactured. Alongside these products, Artificial Saliva Spray has also been introduced as another product. The achievements have resulted in foreign exchange



savings equivalent to \$43 million through import substitution and is considered a landmark in the country's path towards pharmaceutical self-sufficiency.

RAI sets target for transporting 54m tons of cargo by year-end

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The managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) announced plans to transport 54 million tons of cargo via the rail network by the end of the Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2025). Speaking at the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting of Middle East Railways (UIC RAME), Jabar Ali Zakeri stated, "Approximately eight million tons of this volume is allocated to export, import, and transit cargoes," as reported by IRNA. The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways hosted the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting, attended by the managing directors of railways from Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Iraq along with accompanying delegations. The deputy minister of roads and urban development said,

"Given Iran's rail network connectivity to Central Asia, Russia, and China, as well as its connection to the European network via Turkey, Iran holds a favorable position for rail transit and international freight transport along East-West and North-South corridors." Zakeri, noting that active railway diplomacy is on Iran's agenda, continued, "Cooperation with Iraq on constructing the Shalamcheh-Basra railway line, agreements with Turkey to build a new rail route from the Cheshmeh Soraya (Soraya Spring) – located at the zero border point between Iran and Turkey, and increased cargo transit from Afghanistan toward Turkey are among the measures taken in this regard." The RAI chief emphasized, "In line with the new approach and policies of the railway, strong connections exist with Russia,

Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan for freight transport along the western branch of the North-South Corridor." The official, highlighting the railway's activities in promoting training and updating rail industry personnel's knowledge, stressed, "We welcome international educational activities." François Davenne, executive director of the International Union of Railways (UIC), Bertrand Minari, Middle East regional coordinator, and several other UIC members attended the assembly via video conference. The attendees thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways for hosting the 35th Regional Assembly Meeting of Middle East Railways and expressed their views for enhanced interaction and cooperation among railways.

TPO warns of losing export market in neighboring Iraq

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The deputy of Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, referring to the increasing trend of Iraq's gross domestic product (GDP), stated, "Estimates indicate that in the coming years, Iranian goods will have no market in this country, and industrialists must prioritize quality production to maintain this export market." Amir Roshanbakhsh Qanbari, deputy for the promotion of international business at the TPO, emphasized that Iraq is one of Iran's important trade partners, adding, "The increase in GDP improves the living conditions of the country's people, and enhancing the quality of domestically produced goods is essential for preserving the export market in Iraq." He made the remarks on Saturday during the ceremony honoring exemplary exporters and the nationwide women's conference in northeastern province of Semnan. Iraq ranked ninth among Arab countries in GDP per capita for 2025, according to data released by Country Cassette, a platform that monitors international economic indicators, shafaq.com reported. Within the Arab region, Qatar recorded the highest GDP per capita at \$71,653, fol-



lowed by the UAE at \$51,294. Saudi Arabia ranked third with \$30,099, trailed by Kuwait (\$29,951), Bahrain (\$28,857), Oman (\$20,546), Libya (\$6,801), Algeria (\$5,691), and Iraq (\$5,668). Stating that the value of the country's exports in the last Iranian calendar year – 1403 (began on March 20, 2024) was between \$57 and \$58 billion, Roshanbakhsh Qanbari continued, "Iran has a competitive advantage over Iraq and Afghanistan, and these two countries are considered Iran's economic partners." The TPO official stated that commercial governance in Iran is inappropriate and requires reform, saying, "The enactment of diverse laws for private sector businesses is burdensome."

Tehran-Dushanbe railway transit breaks Tajikistan's landlocked status

Economy Desk

Iran and Tajikistan commenced a new chapter aimed at enhancing railway cooperation between the two nations through the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Signed on Thursday between Jabar Ali Zakeri, deputy transport minister and head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, and Mirzoali Komil Jumakhon, head of Tajikistan's State Unitary Railway Enterprise, the agreement lifts Tajikistan out of its state of isolation. As a landlocked country, Tajikistan, established following the dissolution of the Soviet Union

in 1991, seeks to strengthen and expand its railway trade through this new agreement with Iran. The nation requires access to southern warm-water ports for the expansion of its foreign trade. Furthermore, Tajikistan shares a border with China and was historically part of the 2,000-year-old Silk Road. According to experts, one route of the East-West Corridor passing through Iran traverses the country. Mehdi Baqeri, a transportation and transit expert, stated that the agreement between Iran and Tajikistan to facilitate railway transit and utilize Iranian railcars on Tajikistan's railway

network represents a significant step towards commercializing the East-West Corridor and the North-South Corridor passing through Iranian territory. The understanding, forged in pursuit of developing railway diplomacy and with the objectives of optimally utilizing existing capacities, fostering regional economic development, and increasing international rail transport, permits Iranian railcars to operate on the Tajikistan railway network. Dispatching Iranian railcars from the Tajikistan rail network to other railways constitutes another clause of the signed memorandum. Consequently, the exchange and

transit of Iranian railcars across all former Soviet railway lines becomes feasible, as they share a standard rail gauge and identical railway regulations dating back to the Soviet era's dissolution. Upon returning from his visit to Tajikistan on Friday, the Iranian vice president expressed hope that by pursuing the agreements and achievements secured during the trip, the level of relations and cooperation with Tajikistan would increase to several times the current level. Mohammadreza Aref emphasized, "By pursuing the agreements and achievements from this visit, the level of relations and cooperation with Tajikistan will reach



several times the current level, and particularly, the private sectors of both sides can engage in more substantive cooperation." Alongside enhancing railway cooperation between the two countries, significant agreements were reached in the fields of science and technology, the

extension of visa-free stays from 10 to 30 days to facilitate tourism, the implementation of a railway line to Tajikistan, multilateral cooperation concerning water, electricity, and gas transfer, and cooperation in technical and vocational education between the officials of the two nations.