

15 million Iranians vulnerable to drug abuse: police chief

Tehran Times Social Desk

TEHRAN — National Police Chief Esmail Ahmadi-Moqaddam has said that about 10 to 15 million people in Iran are vulnerable to drug abuse.

Speaking to the Mehr News Agency on Monday, Ahmadi-Moqaddam said that there are presently 1.2 million drug addicts in the country.

Drug addiction is on the top of the social problems that has caused so much concern in the society, he added.

Unfortunately, Ahmadi-Moqaddam said, campaigns against drug addiction would not produce the same results as campaigns against thugs or drug trafficking.

According to the official statistics, there are 1.2 million drug addicts in Iran while the unofficial sources show that the figure exceeds 6 million.

Press watchdog closes Sarmayeh daily

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Iran's Press Supervisory Board has shut down the reformist Sarmayeh economic daily.

According to the public relations office for press affairs at the Culture Ministry, the license for the publication of the newspaper was revoked in compliance with the note 13 of the Article 11 of Press Law.

"The paper had repeatedly violated Article 9 of the Press Law," the report stated.

The paper had also changed the size and format of the newspaper contrary to its publication license without receiving required permits from the Press Supervision Board, the report added.

Based on the report, the daily published materials irrelevant to its specialized area that was human science, education and research methods.

Hussein Abdeh Tabrizi was the managing director of the Sarmayeh economic daily. The paper had previously received written notices from Press Supervision Board as well as the general department for supervision on Iranian press and news agencies.

Parliamentary faction rejects filing lawsuit against Ahmadinejad

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — Majid Nasirpour of the Majlis minority faction has dismissed reports that the faction has filed any lawsuit against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The faction has not discussed such an issue in any of its meetings, he told the Mehr News Agency on Monday.

Nasirpour added that resorting to such extremist behaviors would undermine democracy in the country.

"Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran is in need of peace and going to extremes would hurt the system," he explained.

The MP emphasized that extremism is the greatest threat to the nation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Nasirpour pointed out that filing a complaint against any presidential candidate is considered a political move rather than a legal act, adding the MPs are not authorized to do so.

He also criticized a number of MPs who have filed a suit against one of the candidates and said that these efforts are below the Majlis dignity.

Mottaki calls for economic cooperation among D8 states



KUALA LUMPUR (IRNA) — Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said here Monday that Tehran attaches great importance to economic, scientific and technical cooperation among member states of the D8 group.

Mottaki who arrived in the Malaysian capital city on Sunday, made the remarks while addressing the 12th ministerial meeting of the D8 group.

Referring to the global economic crisis, he called for appropriate measures

to reduce the economic and social consequences of such a crisis in the D8 member states.

On great potentials existing in all D8 countries, Mottaki stressed that they can play a constructive and effective role in founding the economic and monetary structure of world countries.

As to efforts made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to help establish an investment fund among the D8 member states, he expressed hope that the project would become materialized in the near future.

He voiced Iran's readiness to provide the fund with dlr 20 million as its primary asset.

The Iranian foreign minister also called for greater roles to be played by private sectors of the member states in various economic projects.

D8 group comprises of eight developing Islamic countries, namely Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt and Nigeria.

State bodies to coordinate fight against swine flu spread

Tehran Times Social Desk

TEHRAN — The Majlis, the executive bodies such as medical and health care centers, and educational institutions are working together to coordinate fight against the spread of swine flu in the country, MP Hassan Aboutorabi said on Monday.

The relevant bodies will take any necessary measures in this regard and that there is nothing to be worried about, Aboutorabi, the deputy Majlis speaker, told the Mehr News Agency.

"So far 444 people have been diagnosed with H1N1-A virus, commonly known as swine flu, over the past seven

days, bringing the country's total number of H1N1-A infected cases to 1,638," Mohamad Mahdi Gouya of the Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

According to Gouya, 17,150 people have been infected with the swine flu virus in the East Mediterranean region, and the death toll in the region stood at 111 up to that time.

Iran's first swine flu case was a 16-year-old Iranian-American boy, who tested positive for the disease on June 22, upon his arrival in Tehran.

The disease has become epidemic in 177 countries around the world. A total of 449,000 people around the world have

been infected with swine flu and 5000 others have died from the virus since the disease burst onto the scene in Mexico in April.

Meanwhile, a member of the Majlis Health Committee said on Monday that the officials must adopt necessary strategies to fight the disease as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, the spread of swine flu is not addressed seriously in the country and the flu endemic is getting worse, he regretted.

He also said there is no precise information about the number of cases and the degree of disease severity in Iran.

Iran should not be deprived of 'national uranium'

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN — Head of the Majlis research center Ahmad Tavakkoli stated that the nation should not be deprived of the "national uranium".

Why should the Iranian nation be deprived of national uranium for which it has paid huge economic and trade costs, he told the Mehr News Agency on Monday.

Tavakkoli pointed out that Iran does not have good memories of negotiations with Westerners and each they have failed to fulfill their promises and commitments.

He also said that based on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), those countries that have nuclear technology should provide Iran with facilities needed for the development of nuclear technology



and they have not done their duties so far.

The MP emphasized that the negotiating partners should be held responsible for the promises that they have not fulfilled yet.

There is no reason to assume that Westerners will providing Iran with enriched uranium apart from their duties in this regard and that Iran should step back from its rights instead, he explained.

According to a draft deal drawn up by the IAEA, a large consignment of Iran's enriched uranium would be shipped out of the country for processing into fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent for the Tehran reactor. However, many Iranian officials, including parliamentarians, believe that Iran should buy the fuel for the reactor without sending its own low-enriched uranium (LEU) abroad.

Envoys submit credentials to Ahmadinejad



GERMAN AMBASSADOR



AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR



CUBAN AMBASSADOR

TEHRAN — New envoys from Germany, Austria, and Cuba submitted their credentials to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad here on Monday.

In a meeting with the new German Ambassador Bernd Erbel, the president said the era of global arrogance is in decline and for the past 60 years many countries including Germany have suffered huge losses.

Commenting on deep-rooted ties between Iran and Germany, the president said, "We are determined to bolster bilateral ties based on mutual respect."

The Iranian and German nations are gifted with ancient cultures and for the past 60 years both countries have been

deprived of their right to play a leading role in cultural developments around the globe, he noted.

The growing political, cultural and economic relations between the two countries is an indication that exercising patience and resistance have produced fruitful results for both countries and ensured a bright future for them, Ahmadinejad stated.

Receiving Austrian envoy Bax Baum, the president said, Iran expects countries like Austria that has the record of adopting independent positions to stand against wrong conduct of arrogant powers.

"During the past decades, we have witnessed cordial ties between the two countries and the Islamic Republic of

Iran lashes out at U.S. anti-Islam approaches

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Iranian foreign ministry on Monday denounced the anti-Islam approaches adopted by the U.S. officials, and expressed regret over the manifestation of such an attitude in

Washington's foreign policy.

"As the vast and deep hatred felt by the Muslim world's public opinion for the negative approaches of the U.S. administration is on the increase, presentation of unaccountable and projective views and illogical prescriptions for others are instances of anti-Islam and double standard

behavior," Ramin Mehman-Parast, the newly appointed Foreign Ministry Spokesman, said.

Referring to the U.S. veto of Goldstone report on Palestine at the UN Human Rights Council, Mehman-Parast blasted the U.S. officials' contradictory behaviors in relation to Muslim countries.



Britain, Russia want swift Iran reply on nuke deal

MOSCOW (AFP) — Britain and Russia have urged Iran to give a prompt response to a UN-drafted nuclear fuel deal, Foreign Secretary David Miliband said on Monday during a visit to Moscow.

"We both want to see a prompt response from the Iranian regime in respect to the Tehran research reactor proposal," Miliband said at a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

"The truth is, Iran can be treated as a normal country if it behaves as a normal country," Miliband added.

Lavrov said Moscow was counting on Tehran to approve the nuclear fuel deal, which was thrashed out at a meeting last month in Vienna with representatives of Iran, Russia, France and the United States.

"This meeting ended with an agreement... which we are counting on all the participants, without exceptions, to approve, including Iran," Lavrov said.

Iran has delayed giving a clear response to the plan, which was brokered by the UN atomic energy watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and is seen as a possible solution to the Iranian nuclear standoff.

The Islamic Republic is under pressure to sign the deal, which would see its low-enriched uranium sent to Russia and France for conversion into fuel and sent back to a Tehran research reactor monitored by the IAEA.

Earlier on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki called for a review of the proposal.

The proposed agreement has faced stiff opposition from top Iranian officials who say it is a Western sleight of hand aimed at getting Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment work.

Lavrov said Russia was "united" with Britain on the need to fulfill the nuclear fuel agreement, as well as on the need for inspections at Iran's nuclear facility near the holy city of Qom.

Iran agreed to let a team of IAEA inspectors visit the site last week.

"The initial information indicates that Iran cooperated with the agency's inspectors during this visit," Lavrov said.

Lavrov added that he and Miliband had agreed it was "highly important" for the six world powers negotiating with Iran on its nuclear program to hold another meeting to discuss Tehran's own proposals on the standoff.

Russia and Britain are two of the countries engaged in the six-party talks, along with France, China, Germany and the United States.

Russia, which has closer ties with Iran than any other major world power, is seen as a key player in any possible solution to the standoff.

Moscow has long resisted calls for tougher sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear drive.

Merkel, Obama to discuss Afghanistan, Iran and Mideast peace process

BERLIN (IRNA) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel is to hold talks with the U.S. President Barack Obama on a series of international issues, among them Afghanistan, Iran and the Mideast peace process when she meets him in Washington on Tuesday, a German official said on Monday.

Addressing a routine press briefing in Berlin, government spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm said the high-level talks will dwell on the future of the Afghanistan strategy, Iran's reply to the international mediation proposal and the latest developments in the Middle East peace process.

Other issues to be discussed at the Merkel-Obama meeting includes climate protection and the situation of the world economy, he added.

Merkel is also scheduled to address both chambers of the American Congress on Tuesday following an invitation by the U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The German leader's speech in Congress is to zoom on the 20th anniversary fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 and European-American relations.

Only one other chancellor, Konrad Adenauer in 1957, has addressed the U.S. Congress.

This will be Merkel's first visit to the U.S. since winning reelection on September 27.

Police seize 1000 kg of smuggled drugs in Tehran

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Law-Enforcement troops of Tehran province have seized 1000 kg of illicit drugs in ten days, a provincial police commander announced on Monday.

"Thanks to the efforts made by the security forces, 1 ton of illicit drugs, including opium, hashish and heroin have been discovered and seized during the last 10 days," the Law-Enforcement Commander of Tehran's Police General Ali Reza Akbarshahi told reporters.

He noted that the police forces have been able to seize 15 tons of illicit drugs during the last 7 months since the beginning of the current Iranian year (started on March 20). Akbarshahi added that seizure of illicit drugs by the Iranian police forces has undergone a 50% growth.

The commander stated that the police have disbanded 66 gangs and arrested 912 drug traffickers during the last 7 months.

Iran alone makes 85 percent of the world's total opium seizures.

During the past Iranian year (ended on March 20,) Iran seized more than 1,000 tons of opium smuggled from Afghanistan, the largest producer of opium poppy in the world.