

Iran will continue 20% enrichment at Fordo, Natanz: official - Tehran Times

Political Desk

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TEHRAN – Atomic Energy Organization of Iran Director Fereydoun Abbasi has said that Iran will continue the production of enriched uranium to a purity level of 20 percent at Fordo and Natanz uranium enrichment facilities. “5 percent uranium enrichment is continuing at Natanz, and we will continue 20 percent enrichment at Fordo and Natanz to meet our needs,” Abbasi told reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony held in Tehran on Wednesday to commemorate the first anniversary of the martyrdom of Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan, a graduate of Sharif University of Technology in chemical engineering and an official at the Natanz nuclear enrichment facility, who was assassinated in Tehran on January 11, 2012, when a magnetic bomb attached to his car detonated.

On the relations between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), he said that Iran is fully cooperating with the UN nuclear watchdog within the framework of regulations.

“We are committed to the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) and will continue our work according to it. Regular inspections of Iran’s nuclear facilities are being carried out on a daily basis, and our colleagues are cooperating with the agency’s inspectors within the framework of regulations,” he stated.

In addition, he said that Iran will not agree to the demands made outside the framework of the NPT.

Iran and the IAEA will hold a new round of talks over the country’s nuclear program on January 16.

The latest round of high-level talks between Iran and the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) over the country’s nuclear program was

also held in Moscow on June 18 and 19, 2012. A new round of talks is expected to be held in January.

The main bone of contention between Tehran and the West is Iran's uranium enrichment program.

Iran says all its nuclear activities are totally peaceful, and, as an IAEA member and a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signatory, it has the legal right to produce nuclear fuel for its research reactors and nuclear power plants.

The major powers have demanded that Iran halt 20 percent enrichment of uranium, shut down the Fordo uranium enrichment facility, and ship all of its stocks of 20 percent enriched uranium out of the country.

Iran's main demand is that its right to uranium enrichment, as enumerated in the NPT, be recognized.

Bushehr nuclear plant reconnected to national grid

Elsewhere in his remarks, Abbasi said that the Bushehr nuclear power plant was reconnected to the national grid on Saturday.

He said that plant will become fully operational in two to three years.

He also said that a number of Western companies have proposed to build new nuclear power plants in Iran.

The Bushehr plant, which is located near the port of Bushehr on the coast of the Persian Gulf, will produce 1000 megawatts of electricity once it becomes fully operational.

The plant, a symbol of Iran's peaceful nuclear program, was shut down in October for the removal of nuclear fuel as part of a normal procedure.

On November 30, a spokesman for the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom), which built the power plant, said the fuel discharge had been a planned removal for safety testing. He denied a Reuters report that the shutdown had been because of safety concerns after stray bolts had allegedly been found under fuel cells at the plant.

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