

Ahmadinejad speaks on kidnapped student

by UPI

TEHRAN -- Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said his government is doing its utmost to secure the release of an abducted Japanese student. Speaking to Kyodo news service, the Iranian leader said the university student, Satoshi Nakamura, 23, who was kidnapped in Iran last October, is being held outside the country. "We are making utmost efforts and negotiating so that the young man can return home," Ahmadinejad told Kyodo. The report said Nakamura was taken Oct. 7 as he was traveling in the southeastern Iranian city of Bam. It is reported the abductors are part of a drug smuggling group operating in southeastern Iraq. Iranian officials say efforts to get Nakamura released have been hampered as he is now in a "third country," presumed to be neighboring Pakistan, Kyodo said. The abductors' group, led by Doghai Shahbakhsh, reportedly is asking Iran to release their detained members in exchange for Nakamura's freedom. Those in Iranian custody are allegedly linked to a shooting rampage in which several Iranian police officers were killed.

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