

Mexico's President Acknowledges Distrust, Fear

BY CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY— Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto acknowledged Wednesday that the country's crime, corruption and economic troubles have caused distrust and anger among Mexicans.

While Peña Nieto stressed his administration's achievements in structural reforms and government programs, his state-of-the-nation address Wednesday contained a dose of realism.

Peña Nieto began the annual speech by mentioning the disap-

pearance of 43 students in 2014, and the escape of drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman.

"The last year has been a difficult one for Mexico," he said. "Our country has been deeply wounded by a series of regrettable cases."

"Complaints about conflicts of interest and corruption ... have created anger and indignation in Mexican society," he said. One of the highest profile cases involved First Lady Angelica Rivera's purchase of a mansion from a government contractor. She later returned the house.

He also noted that the economy was a major source of concern.

Prices for Mexico's oil exports are at low levels, and the Mexican peso has fallen about 30 percent against the U.S. dollar over the last year. Two million more Mexicans entered poverty from 2012 to 2014.

"Today, Mexicans hear that oil prices are falling and the dollar is rising and, even those are linked to international issues, they cause fear about the economic effects," Peña Nieto said.

But Peña Nieto urged Mexicans to not allow pessimism to carry them toward those who promise easy solutions.

"Where there is intolerance,

demagoguery or populism, nations far from reaching the change they aspire to, find division and setbacks," Peña Nieto said.

Peña Nieto pledged that in the last half of his six-year term the government would combat corruption and crime.

The written report that the president's office released Wednesday reflected uneven progress in the fight against drugs, crime and violence.

For example, as Mexico's opium and heroin exports rise, the country now focuses more effort on eradicating opium poppies than on wiping out marijuana crops. For example,

in the first seven months of 2015, about 42,450 acres (17,180 hectares) of poppy fields were destroyed by authorities, almost seven times more than the amount of marijuana. In the past, marijuana had accounted for about 60 percent of drug crops destroyed in Mexico.

The unenviable circumstances are far different from what he faced during his last report on Sept. 2, 2014, just after he had won passage of a series of energy, education and telecom reforms, a success he said would put Mexico on the path to greater growth.

Hospital

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that with our new rooms."

The new wing has 12 patient rooms that are built to ensure privacy. Before the remodel, patient rooms were double occupancy. This involved shared space and bathrooms — conditions that are not necessarily the best for healing.

"I think this new wing will add to the satisfaction of patients and families

because they now have that privacy," said Chief of Staff Dr. Mel Wallinga. "They don't have to worry about that infection rate and they can do lot of things they couldn't do before."

The older rooms were also located on the second floor, and staff had to haul patients up long ramps and small elevators to get to the rooms. Now, the new wing was built in addition to the first-floor care. The new renovations have not only been healthier, but also more convenient.

"Having things on the

same level is a real advantage," Deurmier said. "Our staff has provided such good, quality service, and now our accommodations match that."

With the hospital's emergency room at the other end of the hall, patients can easily be transferred from the emergency entrance to receive X-rays or intensive care.

"We have the emergency room downstairs and we are trying to cover our patients upstairs," Wallinga said.

"Sometimes, when you only have two people on at night,

it spreads them very thin. This way, they can do it all at one time."

The facilities also added a new chapel, a nurse's station and a full pharmacy to the new wing.

"To have four pharmacists on a full-time basis that can be involved in our inpatient, outpatient care is really something that enhances our hospital," Deurmier said.

The \$2 million project began construction in July 2014 and was completed earlier this summer.

St. Michael's Hospital was

built in 1950. A renovation in 1960 that created the patient rooms floor that were still in use before the addition of the new wing, without having undergone much change.

"We had looked at renovating our existing patient rooms, but we never really came up with a plan that felt good," Deurmier said. "Our architect said that for the same amount of money it would take to renovate the rooms, you could add on a new wing. So it was a no-brainer to go in that direction."

With the new wing up and

running, hospital representatives hope it will entice other patients to seek care in the facilities, as well as possibly add more physicians to their staff.

"This is something we can do to make sure we keep medicine in here Tyndall," Wallinga said. "I admire the collaboration of the board, the staff and our community's ability to look forward."

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