Iraqi businesswoman tells of abuse in US custody

PARIS, 13 Oct — A wealthy Iraqi businesswoman said to have been the last female prisoner at Iraq’s infamous Abu Ghraib Prison said she saw soldiers of abuse in US custody.

Houda Al-Azzawi also said that, while held in another detention centre before being transferred to Abu Ghraib, she was beaten, deprived of food and sleep and had her shoulder dislocated by a guard, Le Monde reported Tuesday.

The newspaper did not specify the nationality of the guards alleged to have mistreated her.

Al-Azzawi, 49, was arrested by US forces on 22 December and accused of financing the Iraqi resistance, the newspaper said. She was initially held in the Adhamiya detention centre, sharing a cell with her sister, who also was arrested along with their three brothers, the newspaper said.

One night, the naked dead body of one of the brothers was thrown into the cell, on top of the sister, Nahla, the newspaper said.

“She was panicking. She realized that the body was inert. With my hands cuffed in front of me, I was able to lift up a corner of my blindfold. The naked man was Ayad, my brother, and his face was covered in blood,” the newspaper quoted Al-Azzawi as saying.

She continued: “I asked Nahla to bow her head to verify whether his heart was still beating. It wasn’t. She spent the night with Ayad’s body on her knees.”

The newspaper did not specify who allegedly threw the body into the cell. Ayad’s death certificate cites coalition forces on 22 December and accused of being transferred to Abu Ghraib after her release on July 19. Le Monde reported 11 October.

The publication in April of photographs showing naked, terrified Iraqi prisoners being abused and humiliated by grinning American guards at Abu Ghraib caused outrage in Iraq and internationally.

“We were all witness to scenes that were similar or worse,” Le Monde quoted Al-Azzawi as saying.

Al-Azzawi said, however, that conditions improved after the scandal erupted.

US forces say there are no more women in their custody at Abu Ghraib, but there is a section run by Iraq for ordinary criminals and it is unclear if there are any women there. — MNA/AP

Germany, Uzbekistan seek enhanced cooperation

ALMA ATA, 13 Oct — Uzbek Prime Minister Shavkat Mirziyiyev held talks Tuesday with visiting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder on the prospect of bilateral cooperation and regional security, the Uzbek Government said in a press release.

During the talks, Schroeder stressed the role of Uzbekistan in helping stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and fighting terrorism, according to reports circulating here from Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan.

Noting that drug trafficking is an important financial source for terrorists, Schroeder praised Uzbekistan for its stepped-up efforts in recent years to crack down on drug smuggling from Afghanistan. Mirziyiyev, for his part, said Uzbekistan has maintained high mutual political trust with Germany, its important strategic partner in Europe.

Political relations have been continuously strengthened and cooperation in various fields rapidly developed between the two countries, he added.

Schroeder flew in from the Afghan capital of Kabul on Monday. According to the Uzbek Foreign Ministry, trade between Uzbekistan and Germany reached 334 million US dollars in 2003, and Germany’s investment in Uzbekistan totalled 1.3 billion dollars.

Putin backs Kyoto Protocol

MOSCOW, 13 Oct — Russian President Vladimir Putin unambiguously backed the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday, in his first public comments since his government sent it to the Kremlin-dominated Parliament for ratification.

Russian ratification is vital to the environmental pact, which needs the backing of nations responsible for 55 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. After Washington pulled out in 2001, Moscow’s participation is essential to meet targets.

Visiting Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin congratulated Putin on the Russian Government’s recent decision to back the treaty, TASS news agency said.

“I hope that Canada’s position and its prime minister’s support for Russia’s decision to back the protocol will have a positive effect on the upcoming debate in the Russian Parliament,” Putin said.

Putin does not formally control the Duma, but it is packed with his loyalists and is expected to decide on ratification by the year-end. — MNA/Reuters

Britain urges US to ratify climate change protocol

LONDON, 13 Oct — British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Tuesday the British Government is continuing to press the United States to ratify the Kyoto Protocol aimed at dealing with problems of climate change.

“The government is working hard to re-engage the United States on the urgency of tackling climate change, despite our differences over Kyoto,” Straw told the House of Commons, the Lower House of the British Parliament.

“We are making every effort to convince United States policy-makers, at all levels, that the right environmental policy, set out in Kyoto, is also good for business,” Straw told the lawmakers, suggesting that signs were emerging that the US view was changing.

The British Government has said it will use its G-8 chairmanship next year to push the climate change agenda to the highest level, with British Prime Minister Tony Blair setting climate change and Africa as the two priorities during Britain’s rotating G-8 presidency.

In December 1997, more than 160 nations met in Kyoto, Japan, to negotiate binding agreements on greenhouse gas emissions for the developed nations. The nations agreed the Kyoto Protocol which limits their greenhouse gas emissions relative to the levels of 1990.

The US, the world’s prime emitter of greenhouse gases, has said it will not ratify the protocol. — MNA/Xinhua

US photographer abducted in Iraq freed

WASHINGTON, 13 Oct — An American photographer abducted by gunmen in Baghdad on Sunday has been freed and is safe, the picture agency representing him said on Tuesday.

Paul Taggart, 24, has been released and has spoken to his parents in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Stephen Claypoole, Chief Executive Officer of the World Picture News Agency in New York, said on Tuesday.

Claypoole said Taggart, who had been in Iraq for about five months, was kidnapped by three masked gunmen early on Sunday morning in Baghdad’s Habibya Square when his car was intercepted by what appeared to be a criminal gang.

He had been on his way to a planned 10-day picture-shooting project in Sadr City, the sprawling and volatile Shiite slum area in the east of the city.

The abduction was one of dozens of kidnappings of non-Americans in recent months, many of which have ended with the victims killed by beheading or other means.

The work of media in Iraq has been severely limited because of the deadly uprising by opponents of the US-led forces that occupied the country last year. Frequent bombings, abductions and shootings have made moving around the country extremely dangerous.

Taggart’s release was partly due to pressure by his journalist colleagues in Baghdad, Claypoole said.

“He is on his way now to the New York Times compound in Baghdad,” he added. He did not give details about the circumstances of the release. — MNA/Reuters

Iraqis search for casualties among the rubble of a destroyed restaurant in Fallujah, following an overnight air raid conducted by US forces over the western city, on 12 Oct, 2004. — Internet
Myanmar enjoying basic humanitarian...

(From page 1)

Because of the existence of delicate social conditions, the vision of Dhamma and the humanitarian spirit based on Four Cardinal Principles, human values with justice as the base, social codes of conduct based on uprightness, honesty and faithfulness, and ethics and customs, all born of traditions and religious teachings, at the foundation of Myanmar culture since ancient times, it can be seen that Myanmar has always been enjoying human rights, women’s rights, child rights, equality of human beings and religious freedom that are not different from western standards, in accord with her own ways and standards since time immemorial.

Certainly, a grand Myanmar society serving the interests of both the secular and religious sectors, will emerge proudly among the global nations, if the Myanmar race, enjoying a high standard of education, to be in conformity with the national outlook and foundation, to be in conformity with the modern-day era.

Under the guise of globalization, bred by the IT development, some powers enjoying superiority over others in wealth and technology are using various means to influence the whole world with one-sided orders, like big villages manipulating the small while ignoring the world nations existing in accord with their own different cultural sectors, derived by the perpetuation of the greedy businessmen, having no national conviction, and ruined by the flow of immodest culture coming into the nation as a modern-day trend, with the Government giving priority to enabling today’s youths to understand and appreciate the essence of national culture.

As Myanmar performing arts have taken root and flourished in the thousand-year-old Myanmar society, the symbols and essence of Myanmar culture, including Myanmar traditions and culture, social ethics and values based on justice, sympathy, loving-kindness and loyalty, that are born of the teachings of Theravada Buddhism, and high standard of justice, administration and legislation, practiced since the time of Myanmar kings, are enshrined in them together.

Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions are being held annually with the aim of enabling youths to understand and appreciate the basic nature of the performing arts together with national essence, and the worthiness and aesthetic value of genuine Myanmar cultural performing arts.

Throughout the successive eras of history, Myanmar drama and marionette have had the power to teach and organize the Myanmar people to become gentle and civilized, to cherish justice and humanitarian spirit, and to enhance their spiritual and physical prowess, while enabling them to live under their own monarchs with high dignity and glory.

Mahawthada Drama, which has been chosen for the marionette genre of this 12th Performing Arts Competitions, is a drama that reveals how Lord Buddha had to strive to attain the virtue of wisdom. The drama is, therefore, well-structured with a great depth of knowledge.

So grand and delicate is the drama that even pandits and maestros of olden days had to compose separate verses for each of the plots like Mahaw Kyeyay Khan (sending message like sending it with a homing pigeon) and Mahaw Umin Khan (fighting by tunnelling). Small as the number of entries of the marionette competition this year is, it is believed that the contestants will be able to distinctly present the essence of Mahawthada Drama: the way the power of wisdom found out the falsity of the wrong philosophy in the clash between wisdom and stupidity, between the educated and the foolish, and between justice and injustice, and Myanmar people’s attitude towards justice.

In like manner, Ramayana Drama, which had been chosen four times for the competition, is a drama imported from a neighbouring country. However, it had existed in the form of fable or literature in the society of Myanmar for many years. From that condition, a succession of maestros had to develop it into the form of court drama. Now, it has become a real drama filled with the traditions and customs of Myanmar.

It is, therefore, believed that the contestants of this competition will be able to give a clear exposition of sincere affection, unwavering loyalty, and profound family spirit that should be cultivated among blood relatives and trustworthy friends, while revealing explicitly the victory of justice over injustice. Similarly, it is also believed that the contestants of other categories of the competitions will portray the meaningful depth of Myanmar performing arts as well as Myanmar character and customs.

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Myanmar enjoying basic…

(from page 6)

It is encouraging to see the young coming to cultivate in their hearts the admiration for national culture and tradition, the practice of pursuing Myanmar traditional cultural performing arts, and the increased understanding of the genuine taste of things Myanmar, for true traditional and cultural arts of Myanmar are getting prominent and being promoted systematically.

Social ethics and values based on higher standard of Myanmar traditions and culture, deep and delicate thought, justice as well as national norms are still in fashion. They still enable us to bring about harmony in Myanmar society. Therefore, Myanmar nationals are urged to display the ability to shape a modern, developed and consolidated Union with the might of the performing arts.

Nowadays, we are implementing the Seven-point Road Map in order to establish a peaceful, modern, developed, discipline-flourishing democratic nation true to Myanmar’s own principles and national essence. More than 1,000 delegates representing all the people of national races from all walks of life are now gathering at the National Convention, which has now been in progress as part of the implementation of the first phase of the Seven-point Road Map. Celebrated Myanmar artistes representing the world of Myanmar performing arts are also taking part in this process.

Therefore, the onus is on all Myanmar artistes to do their bit actively and energetically with an unreserved sense of nationalistic sentiments and with full Union Spirit in the implementation of the Seven-point Road Map starting with the successful holding of the National Convention.

In conclusion, all the artistes are requested — to strive with their talent to further revitalize the national strength that can effectively build and defend the modern and developed nation, while preserving and promoting the national character, national traditions and culture and social values with the aim of making the Union of Myanmar stand grand and firm amid the international community as long as the world exists; — to inculcate in the young the fine historical tradition of Myanmar, racial grandeur, higher cultural standards and profound and deep Myanmar attributes so as to enable them to deter the penetration of alien cultures; and — to play a harmonious and active part unitedly from the artistic sphere for the successful realisation of the Seven-point Road Map formulated for the emergence of a modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation.—MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party enjoy women’s professional dancing contest.— MNA

Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions opened

YANGON, 14 Oct — The first-day programmes of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions were held today at the designated places on a grand scale — the song contest of MITCPA at the National Museum in Dagon Township, the dance contest at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyauk Street, the composing contest at the State School of Fine Arts Department and the music contest at Padomma Theatre on Bagaya Road in Sanyoung Township.

At the National Museum, altogether 11 contestants took part in the higher education level women’s religious song contest. (See page 8)

A contestant taking part in women’s amateur xylophone contest.— MNA

12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions...

(from page 16)

The commander said that the six objectives of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions are to vitalize patriotism and nationalism in all citizens; to preserve and safeguard Myanmar cultural heritage; to perpetuate genuine Myanmar music, dance and traditional fine arts; to preserve Myanmar national character; to nurture spiritual development of the youths; and to prevent influence of alien culture. The different stages of the competition are, professional level, amateur level, higher education level, basic education level (age 15-20), basic education level (age 10-15), and basic education level (age 5-10). The singing contest includes classical songs, religious songs, oldies, and modern songs; in the dance contest, the participants will have to sing and dance to the accompaniment of Myanmar orchestra. Arrangements are under way to create and perform the genuine Myanmar style and culture. In the professional level marionette contest, the participants will perform Mahawthaltha play of the ten Jatakas and in amateur level, they will have to perform Ramayana play. The song composing contest will be held at different levels, and the composers will have to sing their own song. The music contest includes harp, xylophone, piano, violin, mandolin, guitar, dhuman, Myanmar orchestra (individual and group-wise), ozi and dohbat competitions. A total of 2,506 participants will take part in the competitions, and handsome prizes will be presented to the winners. All-round arrangements are being made to hold the competitions in accord with the objectives. Next, member of the Panel of Patrons Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung opened the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.

The second session of the ceremony followed at the National Theatre. U Hla Win and Daw Thida Swe of Myanmar Radio and Televisions of the Ministry of Information acted as masters of ceremonies. Patron of the Competitions Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt delivered an opening address. (The Prime Minister’s address is reported separately.)

Next, artistes presented songs and dances honouring the competitions to the audience. After the ceremony, the Prime Minister cordially greeted diplomats of foreign missions. Later, the Prime Minister and party enjoyed performance of contestants in the women’s dancing contest of the Performing Arts Competitions. — MNA

Contestants of States and Divisions attend opening ceremony of 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.— MNA.
THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Friday, 15 October, 2004

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Malaysian delegation

YANGON, 14 Oct — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of Malaysian Texchem Group of Companies and A S K Andaman Ltd (Myanmar) Dato’ Seri Fumihiko Konishi and party at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konnyintha at 5 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Maung Myint, Director-General at the Prime Minister’s Office U Soe Tint and Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet.

They discussed investment in the fishery sector of Myanmar. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Texchem Group of Companies and Chairman of ASK Andaman Ltd (Myanmar) Dato’ Seri Fumihiko Konishi of Malaysia at Zeyathiri Beikman.— MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Texchem Group of Companies and Chairman of ASK Andaman Ltd (Myanmar) Dato’ Seri Fumihiko Konishi of Malaysia at Zeyathiri Beikman.— MNA

12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural...

(from page 7) Similarly, 11 participants took part in the basic education school level (15-20 age group) boys’ old and modern song contest.

Chairperson of the Panel of Judges for the song contest, Assistant Director Daw Tin Tin Mya of Myanmar Radio and Television, Secretary Assistant Engineer Daw May Pyone Khaing and members supervised the contest. The higher education level men’s classical song contest will be held in the morning on 15 October and the basic education school level (10-15 age group) boys’ dance contest. The higher education level women’s dance contest will be held in the afternoon.

The higher education level men’s classical song contest was held at Pantra School on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan Township, here, this morning.

Eight contestants of basic education level (aged 5-10) took part in it. Panel of judges were led by Bogalay Tint Aung.

The basic education level age 5-10 and amateur level song composing contest will continue tomorrow. Dohbat contest began at Padonna Theatre. Six teams took part in the first session of the contest, and Five teams took part in the professional level contest. U Sein Ba Maw and party were judges. Eight contestants took part in women’s amateur xylophone contest, and seven, in basic education boys (15-20) held at Kanbawza Theatre in Bahan today. Gita Lulin U Ko Ko and party were judges. Men and women’s amateur level, basic education boys and girls (15-20) and basic education boys and girls (5-10) drumming contest will be held on 15 October.

MNA

At the 12th Festival

* At the 12th Festival, we’re meeting again
Journey of the performing arts festival
Elder brother and younger alike
Brothers and sisters get together
Come brother, there’s sister
So very merry, brought from villages
Products of our own community
Sweetmeats, pickled tea, soy slab,
Blankets woven by hand
Home made fish paste, quite a variety
Presents brought with loving-kindness
Union citizens in amity
* Heh look! You’ve put on weight
How handsome, haven’t met long time
In good health, so merry
With great happiness, greet each other
Brethren have arrived,
Competition totally forgotten, in fond embrace
Competition is not the main as if blood speaks
Brother and sister, gleefully get together, with affection
What one says, is heart warming
At the 12th Festival

Yan Naing Oo (Trs)