Police, army

continue in

Egypt: Amnesty

Amnesty International

yesterday said that violent

crackdowns on protesters,

torture of detainees and

disregard for the rule of law

by police forces continues in

Egypt, nearly 20 months

after mass rallies removed

president Hosni Mubarak

of Repression: Egypt's Police

and the Case for Reform',

Amnesty said there was little

sign that Egypt's security

forces have fundamentally

Mohamed Morsy and the

new government had so far

taken no action against the

widespread abuse of pro-

sitting idle as the war crimes

trials of some of its top leaders

cials concerned for their

"inaction" during incidents of

communal violence, includ-

and homes of Buddhists in

Ramu was not an isolated

incident. Such communal

violence had also taken place

in Satkhira, Chirir Bandar in

Dinajpur, Ukhia, Hathazari

and Pathorghata in

Chittagong and Rangamati

this year," said NHRC

places and in Ramu were part

government has done against

the criminals who were

involved in those incidents of

violence. How does the reli-

gious fundamentalist gain

strength to march towards the

US embassy to attack and

barricade Kuril Biswa Road?"

Islami and Islami Chhatra

Shibir men who were engaged

Mizanur said Jamaat-e-

the NHRC boss said.

of a chain.

He said violence in those

"And I want to ask what the

Chairman Mizanur Rahman.

"The attack on pagodas

They blasted police offi-

testers and prisoners.

were at the final stages.

ing the one at Ramu.

Inspired

FROM PAGE 1

The report says President

In a report titled 'Agents

and his regime from power.

abuses

DPA, Cairo

changed.

Nip intolerance in the bud

destroyed temples for all to see. The best way to understand the agony of our Buddhist compatriots is to imagine how we would have felt if our Holy Book had been

As The Daily Star and other print and electronic media reports make it clear, the whole tragic event was premeditated and carefully planned.

The natural question is: Who did it and for what purpose? Is it just to create unrest and tension in a disturbed region of our country? Is it to embarrass the government? Is it just to spoil the image of Bangladesh? Is it only to create misunderstanding between the majority Muslims and the Buddhists? The purpose, in

ple, as a country and as a culture. It is to hit at the very ethos of Bangladesh. It has been an attack on the very foundations of our state, our values and the principles of our Liberation War. And it has been done through using the religious sentiments of the

the social media Facebook. In the account of Uttam Kumar Burua, 25, an unknown Buddhist man, someone 'tagged' a picture that was insulting to the Muslim Holy Book. Facebook works on developing and enlarging the circle of online 'friends' who share messages, pictures, etc., between themselves. This 'circle' of friends grows exponentially as 'friends' of

'friends' and their 'friends' all become part of an ever widening group that grows all the time. In this scenario, anyone within a 'circle of friends' can 'tag' a picture on another's account. In fact, that is how this social media links people.

That is how someone 'tagged' a picture that was insulting to us, the Muslims.

As it is evident that the whole attack on the Buddhists was premeditated, preplanned and quite meticulously organised, it is reasonable to conclude that even the 'tagging' of the picture in the account of a Buddhist youth was part of the plan. Otherwise how so many people could come to know about it in such a short time? We have reports that the offensive picture was sent from one mobile phone to another using Bluetooth technology and through the internet. The situation raises serious

questions about the role, mindset and capabilities of the law enforcement agencies. The police inaction in the early hours of the tragedy, when prompt action could have prevented the burning down of 12 temples, raises doubts about their efficiency, and even their intentions. Can we really brush aside the possibility of local police being complicit? What about our intelligence agencies? We spend hundreds of crores of taka on them, and often see how they harass ordinary citizens over their slightest of 'mistakes'; and yet when it comes to such serious incidents of national security they fail us totally.

What about the ruling

party's front organisations, some of whose leaders and activists were seen in the early processions that were inciting people to attack the Buddhists and their temples? The opposition MP was conspicuous by his absence from the scene. Given our propensity to try to cash in on any religious issue they could have well nigh participated in these activi-

What makes the situation highly complex and worrisome is the presence of a large number of Rohingyas in the area. Given the background of the movement for a Rakhaine state on the Myanmar side of the border and their possible and potential links with international and regional extremist groups, this might well emerge as a national security issue for Bangladesh.

What is of utmost importance at this stage is national unity. We must all work together to prevent our state from being weakened, our national purpose for a democratic polity being distracted, our core values of religious tolerance being subverted, our culture of celebrating diversity being destroyed and the principles of our Liberation War of establishing a multi-religious, multiethnic democratic state being defeated.

But at this very crucial stage we are, regrettably, witnessing a politicisation of this national threat. No sooner did the Buddhists have had their temples burnt and their houses gutted our political leaders went on a quick march to blame their opponents. The first salvo was fired by our newly appointed home minister alleging, without the slightest shred of evidence, the possible involvement of the local MP who, surprise, surprise, belonged to the BNP. The BNP secretary general, Mirza Fakhrul, soon accused the ruling party of being involved, followed by the BNP chairperson parroting the same. Then both parties' propaganda machinery went into overdrive and the blame game began to be played in full swing. All this while the extremists were safely nestled somewhere and were having a good laugh at our expense.

It will be suicidal to politicise this very serious threat to the religious harmony that characterizes Bangladesh before the world. We repeat, never in our history has such a massive attack been carried out on the minorities. Only a few days ago we saw massive unrest in Rangamati area that flared up because of an incident involving some boy talking to some girl of a differ-

ent ethnic group. When the situation is so fragile that minor interpersonal incidents have the potential of becoming inter-ethnic and interreligious conflicts, politicising these issues is a sure formula for disaster and a sure chance for the culprits to escape and repeat their heinous crimes.

Will our political leaders listen? Or will they be so overtaken by mutual hatred and so consumed by their thirst for power that they will ignore such a grave threat to what Bangladesh should, must and does, mostly, stand



Pro-opposition activists torch a car near Bijoy Nagar in the capital yesterday during their clash with law enforcers.

FIROZ AHMED

Prosecution failure to bring witness

War tribunal irked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 yesterday expressed dissatisfaction with the prosecution's failure to produce their witnesses in the war crimes case against Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

The three-member tribunal headed by Justice ATM Fazle Kabir with members Justice Obaidul Hassan and Judge M Shahinur Islam also rebuked the prosecution for their delay in appearing before it.

Earlier, the tribunal completed recording crossexamination of Mohammad Jalal Uddin, 10th prosecution witness in the case.

During the one-hour-and 45-minute-long crossexamination, defence counsel Kafiluddin Chowdhury asked Jalal around 80 ques-

Jalal on Monday testified that Razakar and Al-Badr men led by Kamaruzzaman committed massacre along with the Pakistan army in Sohagpur and Benupara of Sherpur on July 25, 1971 and at least 245 people including his father and uncle were killed that day.

During yesterday's cross-

ness, "Who was the Razakar tion [about the matter] when commander in your locality we were talking about your [during the war]?"

asked the prosecution wit- said, "Why didn't you men-

"Kadir Doctor was a Razakar in our locality and the top commander was Kamaruzzaman," replied Jalal, who hailed from Sohagpur in Sherpur.

"Who was the Al-Badr commander?" the defence counsel asked.

"Al-Badr and Razakar commander was the same man," replied Jalal.

When Jalal's crossexamination was completed at 12:30pm, the tribunal asked AKM Saiful Islam, conducting prosecutor of the case, if his next witness was ready.

Saiful told the tribunal the next witness could be produced at 2:00pm.

When the tribunal resumed proceeding at 2:15pm, none from the prosecution was at the courtroom.

After three minutes, Saiful appeared before the court and said their specific witness was

has some hearing problem," Saiful noted. "Did you know [about his

problem] earlier?" asked Justice Obaidul Hassan.

As Saiful replied in the

"He [the witness] is 84 and

ness in the case.

house at Fatehkharpul area

yesterday found the resi-

dence of Uttam's mother

locked. There were signs of

attack on the teen-shed

wooden house. A group of

demonstrators had tried to

The neighbours who

Many men and women

know the 25-year-old youth

well have a very positive

from Muslim and Buddhist

community said they never

saw anything wrong with

Uttam, except his marriage

which his parents could not

accept. The family wanted

him to get married after his

used to work as an assistant

spread such a derogatory

with his wife and child sepa-

rately since his wedding

Star talked over the last two

days, said they didn't see

Uttam's Facebook account

but heard about a picture

showing Uttam with his feet

picture was circulating like

wildfire from mobile to

copied by some demonstra-

tors and showed to the oth-

Uttam put his feet on Quran,

but these correspondents

saw the picture, shows white

ers on Saturday evening.

This picture was also

Rumour was spread that

mobile via Bluetooth.

But the much-talked

on the Quran.

A year ago he shut down

more than tree years ago.

Neighbours still can't

impression of him.

sister's wedding.

picture.

These correspondents

examination, Kafiluddin affirmative, Justice Hassan

There is a big Kawmi madrasa, Jama'aetul Ulum Al Islamia, with the central mosque of Ramu. Many say a procession had come out of it to join a rally of vandals.

Its principal denies any involvement of anybody from the madrasa in the anti-Buddhist campaign.

But Habib Ullah, a teacher of this madrasa, said they joined a procession around 9:00pm and came back at 11:00pm. They did not take part in vandalism, he claimed.

Nine teachers and 70 students of the madrasa had joined the demonstration, he added.

Habib said he did not see any derogatory picture of Quran, but joined the agitation just hearing about it. He later received the photo over his mobile phone.

Nazibul Islam, officer-incharge of Ramu Police Station, also played a dubious role Saturday night.

Instead of taking instant step to ensure security of Buddhists, he was seen on the stage of a rally that night. The rally was organised to protest the Facebook posting of the anti-Islamic photo with which a Buddhist youth was tagged in.

The OC even made some provocative comments.

"I am a Muslim. I also should have joined the procession. But I am serving the law. I too am pained. Uttam [the Buddhist youth] will be arrested. Please have patience," a madrasa teacher, Ramjan Ali, quoted the OC as saying.

Ramjan's version was corroborated by many oth-

Nazibul Islam was withdrawn from the police station yesterday, but until afternoon, other officers of the station knew nothing about it. They also did not know that Section 144 that dents. bars gatherings has been

Another case was filed

named and 300 to 400 photoinsulting Quran.

Uttam and his wife have dalism and sacrilege of no trace since Saturday destroying shrines. night, but police arrested his These figures compare mother and sister from their

of Ramu.

ransack it.

starkly against as many as 2,500 accused in another case filed for assaults on onduty policemen during the Police have named same

11 persons in the four cases for vandalism and also arrested them. But the investigation officer had no clue as to who they are or how they came to know that these 11 were involved in the

Police so far have arrested 169 people till yesterday evening in connection with the communal violence. Of the arrested, 60 were picked

None from the Ramu Police Station and the district police administration was willing to say anything about the profile of the detainees.

Hafez Ahmed, member of a pro-ruling party organisaincite the attacks.

day since his picture showing him in the procession appeared in a newspaper.

Quasem, local leader of BNP-backed student body Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, in another rally. Quasem says he went there to cover the event as he is a journalist as

dent of Ramu Press Club, joined another rally at Chaumuhuni station, witnesses said. He could not be reached over the mobile phone by these correspon-

feet -- wearing nail polish -on the Quran. The Daily Star could not

had gone to Sherpur to check if security of the witnesses was ensured.

The tribunal fixed October 8 for recording testimony of the 11th prosecution witwould have to be taken

> against them. He said the violence at

> Bangladesh use Facebook. The violence at Ramu was allegedly triggered by a facebook photo disrespecting

> on Facebook cannot be the reason for such violence." He said political parties

for the incident.

would come up with recommendations on what the government should do to stop

recurrence of such incidents. Prof Anisuzzaman said, "We should wage a movement if it does not take any visible actions against the perpetra-

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon called upon the media and distinguished personalities to unite

nal forces. He claimed that Jamaat and its like-minded organisations instigated such incidents of communal violence in the country as the trials of

some suspected war criminals were at the final stages.

his computer kiosk at Ramu Interestingly, most of the locals, to whom The Daily

"The corruption by a hand-

dream-project of millions,' Quader said without making any direct reference. The minister was address-

ing a workshop at a hotel, organised by Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority on the proposed 22-km Bus RapidTransit(BRT).

Quader said the objective of international development partners is noble as they work to alleviate the suffering of the

"The corrupt elements

must be brought to book and dealt with zero tolerance," he said.

and burnt, evidence of which was lying all around the

desecrated in any manner.

our view, is far more sinister. It is to weaken us as a peo-

majority Muslims. It started with a posting on

SQ Chy fired shots to ensure FROM PAGE 20 crimes accused BNP leader

Crimes Tribunal-1 yester-Gopal, one of six people who stayed at Kundeshwari during the war, is the 14th

Salahuddin Quader

Chowdhury at International

prosecution witness in the case. He deposed for about an hour from 11:00am to 12:00pm as fixed by the tribunal. "On my way to Kundeshwari at about 9:00am on April 13, 1971, I

heard gunshots. I rushed to Kundeshwari and found Nutan Chandra was talking with Brojohori, Himangshu Boidya, Monoronjon Singha and Gouranga," said Gopal, who had gone to his sisterin-law's house at Jagotmollopara the previous

The witness, who was about 35 at the time, informed them about firing and suggested that they should have left immedi-

ately. "It didn't take much time. Soldiers following a jeep entered Kundeshwari and stopped at the outer premises of the house," Gopal said, adding, soldiers jumped out of their vehicles

He also saw an army officer and some civilians getting down from the jeep. "Seeing the civilians all shouted, 'They are Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury and Abdul

wielding their guns.

Mahbud'," Gopal added. Gopal and Brojohori hid on the first floor of Nutan's building, while Himangshu Boidya, Monoronjon Singha and Gouranga ran to a jungle

behind the house in fear. Gopal said he and Brojohori went to the latter's room from where he witnessed the incidents.

"I saw the army officer, one or two soldiers and Bengali civilians talking with Nutan. A few minutes later they left the house. They boarded the vehicles. I heard the sound of engines,'

added Gopal. The witness said he had heard the sound of engines after about 10 minutes and again gone into hiding in that room.

At this point of his deposition, the clock hit 11:55am. Tribunal chairman Justice Md Nizamul Huq, who reminded the prosecution several times to maintain the time bar, warned the prosecutor that after 12:00noon no more deposition would be recorded.

Seemingly unprepared at the sudden strict stance of the tribunal, Prosecutor Zead Al Malum asked the witness to complete the

deposition without any unnecessary details.

Gopal then narrated the rest of the deposition at

The witness said Salahuddin Quader came back along with the soldiers. They dragged Nutan out of the temple. "Nutan was crying out," he recalled.

Quoting Salahuddin Quader as saying, Gopal continued, "I have an order from my father to kill you."

Army soldiers then opened fire on Nutan. He was groaning in pain, said Gopal, adding, "I witnessed with my own eyes Salahuddin Quader wielding a pistol or revolver. He shot Nutan Chandra two to three

Salahuddin left the place after ensuring Nutan's death, said Gopal, who along with others fled from Kundeshwari across a paddy

Gopal went to India and returned to Bangladesh after liberation on December 28,

During his deposition, Gopal's cellphone rang three times. The tribunal chairman termed it a total failure of the prosecution in bringing their witnesses to the courtroom without cellphones and expressed his discontent with the prosecution for disobeying

the tribunal's order. CROSS-EXAMINATION

The tribunal yesterday had to adjourn the crossexamination of the witness against the backdrop of an unpleasant situation in the courtroom.

The opening of the crossexamination was not smooth as the defence wanted to cross-examine the witness today [instead of after his deposition yesterday] claiming they were not

prepared. Salahuddin's counsel Ahsanul Huq Heena, who was much appreciated by the tribunal earlier for his professionalism, yesterday lost his temper several times. At one stage, the tribunal warned him not to cross the

During crossexamination Ahsanul several times pronounced Kundeshwari Girls College distortedly as "Kundeshwari Balika [girls] M-o-h-a Viddalay [college]" and it was marked by everyone present at the courtroom including the judges.

it initially as no one broached the subject. Later, Ahsanul Huq asked

But the judges overlooked

the witness if dogs had barked while he was returning from Jagotmollopara. Infuriated by the ques-

tion Gopal said, "Are you

mocking my statement?" "Why should I mock? Dogs are very trustworthy creatures..." replied

Ahsanul. To bring the situation under control the tribunal chairman lightly suggested that the defence should not have demonstrated an aggressive gesture and pos-

ture toward the witness. The defence then threw a mocking question at the witness, asking him if he knew the meaning of gesture and posture.

Following such a ques-

tion, the witness could not keep quiet and reacted. The tribunal chairman this time cautioned the

defence not to mock the

witnesses as they were guests of the tribunal. Ahsanul reacted instantly at the tribunal chairman's

caution. Justice Nizamul Huq reminded the defence counsel that he had pronounced Kundeshwari Balika Mohaviddalay distortedly

for about 18 times which was noted by him. Ahsanul said he could not

help pronouncing it that To strengthen his claim, Ahsanul Hug loudly said, "If s a v M - o - h - a - n Muktijuddha, will it be mock-

Angered by his point Justice Huq again reminded him that he was crossing the

Ahsanul said, "I'm sorry, my lord. Addressing the defence counsel, another member of the tribunal, Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim, said, "You

will say sorry and expect us to consider it?" "This tribunal provides an opportunity that you will not find in the Supreme Court. Judges do not talk much there," said Jahangir

Prosecutor Syed Haidar Ali then stood beside Ahsanul and urged the tribunal to accept his apology. The tribunal then asked

Hossain.

the defence to proceed. But a defence counsel prayed to the tribunal to adjourn the proceedings for the day. The tribunal chairman adjourned the proceedings

and fixed less than one and a

half hour for completing the

cross-examination. Salahuddin Quader, who is facing 23 specific charges of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War, was present at the tribunal.

SUBHAN'S BAIL PETITION REJECTED

The tribunal earlier in the morning rejected the bail petition of war crimes sus- controversial Hawa Bhaban.

pect detained Abdus

sickness were not provided with the petition and he did not seem seriously ill before the tribunal either. In his submission

Abdur Razzaq said Subhan was detained merely for wreaking "political vengeance".

the defence could not be

considered.

DEFENCE WITNESS FOR SAYEDEE A defence witness for war crimes accused Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee yesterday gave deposition and described the killing of Ibrahim Kutti. He, however, did not men-

tion whether Sayedee was involved in the killing. Later, the prosecution

witness. Sayedee was produced

FROM PAGE 20 As the company failed to pay it off, the principal loan plus interest accumulated over

the last 11 years has

Galib Abdus Sattar. Nazrul Islam, senior executive officer of the

Sonali Bank to pay Tk42,000, which is the highest amount of court fee for filing the suit. Earlier, on June 4, 2009,

According to Muhith, Tarique, also son of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia had influenced the then government through the

Subhan.

defence counsel Barrister

persons accused of commit-

amounted to Tk45.49 crore.

recovery of the loan.

power.

called off.

The tribunal in its order mentioned that the required documents regarding his

Justice Hug also said the ting war crimes were being tried at the tribunal. Therefore, political vengeance which was mentioned at the submission by

cross-examined the defence

before the tribunal.

Tarique

The nine other accused include-- Arafat Rahman Koko, Giasuddin Al-Mamun and his wife Shahina Yasmine, Nasrin Iskander, wife of late Sayeed Iskander, Shams Iskander, Shafin Iskander, Sumaiya Iskander, Mozaffar Ahmed and Kazi

bank's principal office filed the case with Artha Rin Adalat-1, while Hosne Ara Begum moved the suit for After the hearing, Judge Md Rabiuzzaman directed

Finance Minister AMA Muhith told the parliament that Dandy Dyeing had got a waiver of interest worth Tk12.16 crore on bank loans within a week after the BNP-Jamaat coalition came to

> Meanwhile, four cases have been filed against 11

A hazy picture appears unnamed persons for van-

vandalism.

up by the Ramu police alone.

Also, names of some local political leaders came as participants of the Saturday night processions.

He left his house yester-

Some others saw Abul

UTTAM OUT OF TRACE

against Uttam Kumar Barua for posting of the Facebook

tion called Ulema League, took part in a protest rally on Saturday evening and issued provocative statements to

Nurul Islam Salim, presi-

verify whether the image was doctored.

you come [at the court]?" "First learn how to behave with the court, then practice, commented Justice Kabir. "Will you be able to bring your witness tomorrow?

"I cannot predict his [wit-

ness'] health condition. But it

would be better if the date is

witness [before lunch]? We

Kabir asked the prosecutor,

"What time is it? When have

At that point, Justice Fazle

would not have sat."

fixed on October 7," replied Saiful. "Would you not be able to

bring your witness before

asked Justice Hassan.

that?" asked Justice Kabir. Saiful replied in the nega-Justice Hassan said he has

learned from newspapers that

the prosecutors had gone to

Sherpur recently.

"Yet, you [the prosecution] couldn't bring your witness, Justice Hassan added. Nurjahan Begum Mukta, another prosecutor, said they

> in the administration and law enforcement agencies have to be identified. He said they were patronising communal forces and stern actions

> > Ramu was certainly premeditated, planned and well organised. Mizanur said only 0.2 percent people of

the holy Quran. He said, "Therefore, a post

were engaged in dirty politics and were blaming each other The NHCR chief said he was likely to visit Ramu and

tors involved in such vio-

believe that Uttam, who and fight against the commudeed writer at Ramu, can Uttam has been living

Corruption

a New York media briefing last Sunday, claimed there had been no corruption in any sector during the present government's tenure.

ful of high-ups is hurting the

common people.