



The collapse of this brick wall in Badda in the capital yesterday claimed the lives of two construction workers and sent two others to hospital. Instead of using pilings to stop dirt sliding into the trench for the foundation, the brick wall was built, inset.

PHOTO: STAR

## Qaeda for intifada in Bangladesh?

FROM PAGE 1

Zawahiri, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam told this newspaper yesterday.

Zawahiri, an Egyptian physician, took the helm of the much-feared global militant organisation after US Navy SEALS killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in 2011.

The audiovisual material starts with photographs from the May 5, 2013 Hefajat-e Islam rally in Dhaka and the subsequent crackdown by law enforcers on it.

"A massacre of Muslims is being carried out these days, and the Muslim world is totally oblivious to it. The western media is colluding with the killers to belittle its significance and hide the facts," the message said.

"Hundreds of callers to the religion and scholars are also facing hardships, manhunts, imprisonment, trials, death sentences and life imprisonments without any guilt," it said.

"My Muslim brothers in Bangladesh, I invite you to confront this crusader onslaught against Islam, which is being orchestrated by the leading criminals in the subcontinent and the West..."

The release went on, "Bangladesh is the victim of the conspiracy in which the agents of India, the corrupt leadership of the Pakistan army, and treacherous power hungry politicians of Bangladesh and Pakistan, who are always prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of fulfilling their ambitions and desires, were all equal participants."

Turning to the Liberation War, 1971, the message said, "Their purpose was not independence from Pakistan, stopping the aggression against the people of Bangladesh, or getting rid of military rule in Pakistan." The real purpose was weakening the Muslim Ummah in the subcontinent, the release claimed.

Bangladesh is being turned into "a subjugated surrogate of India", it also said.

"Those who massacred the Muslims in Bangladesh only yesterday are the same people who are massacring the Muslims in Pakistan today. Similarly, those who allied with India against Pakistan by claiming that they sought

to defend the honour and sanctities of Bengalis are the same people who are attacking the sanctities, beliefs, honour, lives and properties of Bengalis today."

While accusing the media for downplaying the alleged attacks, he also criticised the West for remaining "unmoved".

The events in Bangladesh enjoy the blessings of both India and America, "since their interests in fighting Islam overlap, and this is why their bilateral relations are becoming stronger day by day".

When people of Afghanistan, Mali, and Somalia "decide to implement" Shariah, "they are then met with a full-fledged military onslaught, in which the leading international criminals and their local surrogates take part".

"But when Salman Rushdie, Taslima Nasrin and Ali Rajib Haider insult Islam, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) and the beliefs of Islam, they are treated as heroes who must be defended, honoured, and given awards," said the al-Qaeda chief.

Comparing the situation in Bangladesh with the attacks on Muslims in Myanmar, he said, "The events in Bangladesh and Burma are not too distant from the oppression and killings of Muslims in Kashmir or the racial cleansing in Assam, Gujarat and Ahmadabad either."

'GOVT NOT FRIGHTENED'

Bangladesh has worked with different countries to combat terrorism and gradually built its capacity to deal with the issue in the last five years, State Minister Shahriar told The Daily Star.

"Our efforts and successes in the arena of counterterrorism have been praised by many countries and international platforms. I hope that our partners will continue cooperating with us in this regard."

He alleged the BNP-Jamaat alliance was making political efforts to belittle Bangladesh and it has been instigating international terrorist organisations like al-Qaeda by its irresponsible comments and activities.

The opposition alliance has chosen the path of terrorism as it failed to do anything democratically, Shahriar said. "They carried out terrorist activi-

ties before the parliamentary election and now they are issuing threats through the international terror groups like al-Qaeda."

BNP leaders in Brussels urged the European Union to suspend Bangladesh's trade privileges in the market but their effort went futile, said the state minister.

The recent filing of a complaint against Bangladesh with the International Criminal Court (ICC) was also not by coincidence, he added.

British lawyer Toby Cadman, who represented the Jamaat-e-Islami, filed the complaint on February 14, urging the ICC to conduct an investigation into "the persecution of political foes by the government".

The complaint was filed 10 days after BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in a press briefing cited imaginary figures of unnatural deaths. "The complaint quoted those imaginary figures," Shahriar said.

Asked about the government's next course of action regarding the complaint, he said, "We have learnt about it unofficially and are preparing to respond to it. We will prove that the accusation is false once the ICC informs us of it formally."

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said the government was neither taking the so-called al-Qaeda threat lightly nor giving it too much importance. "The government is not frightened by the threat."

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan told the BBC Bangla service that he had not heard of the audio message but "I would say regarding this that we are always alert to the matter and that we will never allow the rise of terrorism in our country."

Asked about the post, Senior Home Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed said they are looking into it.

Also, Director General of the Rapid Action Battalion Mokhlesur Rahman said the al-Qaeda chief's so-called statement did not go with the real picture in Bangladesh. "The situations in Bangladesh and Afghanistan are not the same."

The law enforcement agencies are always ready to deal with such threats, the official added.

forces since January this year, said Ain O Salish Kendra based on reports of 14 major newspapers.

The ringleader of the forest robber gang is Siraj Sikdar. He allegedly led the robber gang called "Siraj Sikdar Bahini".

The gang was gathering in the area when police launched a raid before the "shootout" began, claimed Sikdar Akkas Ali, officer-in-charge of Dakope Police Station.

identified and will be handed over to the police," a peacekeeper from the African Union MISCA mission told AFP.

But despite surrounding the house of a senior militia leader Patrice Edouard Ngaissa, the soldiers failed to capture the man who casts himself as the political coordinator of the fearsome "anti-balaka" militias.

"They didn't manage to take me, I was out," Ngaissa said later.

French and African peacekeepers yesterday seized weapons from militia in the capital of the strife-torn Central African Republic, but failed to detain a wanted leader of the rogue group.

The international troops went house to house for about four hours in Bangui's Boy Rabe neighbourhood, the base of mostly Christian militias

## Two killed

FROM PAGE 16

officer-in-charge of Badda Police Station. The owners were building a six-storey structure without taking adequate safety measures, he claimed.

"They had dug deep for the foundation of the building but did not install any piling or reinforcing was done with only a brick wall," he added.

Two contractors were detained in this connection.

Fire brigade sources said they had rushed to the spot but found the victims had already been pulled out of the rubble by locals.

## Padma bridge

FROM PAGE 16

"The construction work of the main bridge will begin in June, while that on river training in July," he mentioned.

The minister was talking to journalists after visiting Mawa-Jazira connecting road at Madbarchar of Shibchar upazila.

The construction of river protection dyke at Jazira point is at the last stage while that of dyke at the Mawa end will begin soon, he added.

Quader, who frequently visits road construction works across the country, said five percent work on Mawa connecting road has been completed while 22 percent work on Jazira connecting road.

Construction of four rehabilitation centres for those who will be affected for land acquisition, is at the final stage, he noted.

## Fire kills two

FROM PAGE 16

Col Saeed Sarhan, civil defence spokesman in the Makkah region, said eight rescue teams put out the blaze and rescued residents trapped inside the building.

The bodies were kept at King Abdulaziz Hospital.

"After completion of the formal procedures, the bodies will be brought back home soon," Mohsin Chowdhury, director (welfare) at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, told The Daily Star.

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