

Govt must punish arsonists masterminds to stop violence: PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT:

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today said they would ensure that none can burn the people to death alive in future by giving exemplary punishment to the arsonists and the masterminds behind the heinous acts. "We are taking required measures against the arsonists and their masters so that none can burn the people to death and such heinous acts," she said. Yesterday Sunday the premier made the remarks while speaking at a post-election greeting and view

exchange meeting with leaders and activists of Kotalipara AL and associate bodies in Kotalipara Upazila Chattar here. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's younger daughter and prime minister's younger sister Sheikh Rehana was present. Sheikh Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League (AL), said many persons involved in the arson violence and their masters have already been brought to book while the remaining others must be netted after scrutinizing the video

footages of the CCTV cameras which are now available everywhere. "None of those who have done such heinous acts will be spared. We are currently taking measures against them and will continue the legal actions against others," she said. The Prime Minister came down heavily on the BNP-Jamaat clique for their activities for what they call democracy, saying, "Their movement means burning people to death alive and torching vehicles, including buses and trains." She said they did

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yesterday Sunday Bangladesh Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke at an exchange meeting with leaders of Kotalipara Upazila Awami League and allied organizations at Kotalipara Upazila Parishad premises in Gopalganj. At that time his younger sister Sheikh Rehana was present —PID

PM for taking projects considering people's benefit

STAFF REPORTER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday Monday asked the local administration here to take development projects considering their benefits for the country and the people. "Bear some things in mind whenever you go to take any development schemes and that is the return of the projects after its implementation and how much the country and its people will be benefited," she said. The premier advised not to take any development project to expense the public money

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Finance Minister promises to tackle economic challenges

STAFF REPORTER

New Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmud Ali has pledged to tackle economic challenges surrounding the country's economy. "We all know about the challenges centering the country's economy. Now we'll have to work together to address the challenges," Ali said after taking office today at the Ministry of Finance at Bangladesh Secretariat here yesterday Monday. Ali, however, said that it is not possible to solve all the problems overnight. "Let us work and see and we also need support from the media," he added. Asked about his first priority, the new finance minister said

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Road accidents claim 7,902 lives in 2023

STAFF REPORTER

As many as 7,902 people died and 10,372 others were injured in 6,261 road accidents across the country in the year 2023, reports Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity. A total of 6,929 accidents occurred across roads, rail tracks, and waterways in the year, resulting in 8,505 fatalities and 10,999 injuries, according to the annual road accident report presented by the organisation's Secretary General Md Mozammel Haque Chowdhury. The report was presented in a press conference organised at Sagar-Runi Auditorium of Dhaka Reporters Unity in Segun Bagicha of the capital yesterday Sunday after analysing accident reports published in the country's national and regional dailies and online media during the period. Motorcycle accidents contributed the most to this toll, with 2,031 incidents

resulting in 2,152 deaths and 1,339 injuries. These incidents accounted for 32.43% of all reported accidents, 27.23% of the total fatalities, and 12.90% of the injuries. Meanwhile, the railway sector witnessed 520



accidents, causing 512 fatalities and 475 injuries, while waterway accidents accounted for 148 incidents, resulting in 91 deaths, 152 injuries, and 109 missing persons.

The fatalities included 1,950 drivers, 968 pedestrians, 485 transport workers, 697 students, 97 teachers, 154 law enforcement officers, 985 women, 612 children, 30 journalists, 32 doctors, 16 freedom fighters, eight lawyers, 10 engineers, and 111 political activists. Out of the 8,055 vehicles involved in accidents, buses constituted 16.15%; trucks, pick-up trucks, covered vans, and lorries 24.84%; cars, jeeps, and minibuses 5.91%; CNG-powered autorickshaws 5.39%; motorcycles a 26.2%; battery-operated rickshaws and easybikes 14.47%; and various other types of three-wheelers 7.19%. Of all the reported accidents, 52.83% were cases where vehicles struck pedestrians, 20.5% were from head-on collisions, and 14.29% resulted from vehicles veering off control. Geographically, 34.86% of accidents happened on national highways

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ICCB calls for immediate ceasefire in Gaza unimpeded access for humanitarian supplies

INTERNATIONAL DESK

The International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICCB) has said it is imperative that an immediate ceasefire be enforced in Gaza, as well as ensure unimpeded access to essential humanitarian supplies, including food, water, shelter, medicine, fuel and electricity. "The physical safety of the civilian population must be guaranteed. The occupation needs to end and there must be restitution and reconstruction of all infrastructures, towards full justice for Palestinians having their own State,"

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Govt is able to overcome any conspiracy, pressure: Quader

STAFF REPORTER

Awami League (AL) general secretary and road transport and bridges minister Obaidul Quader yesterday Sunday said the government is capable and courageous to overcome any sorts of conspiracy or pressure. "There are foreign and local pressures. We have enough capacity and courage to overcome such pressures. Implementation of mega projects, including the Padma Bridge and metro-rail, are big examples of that," he said. Quader came up with the remarks while exchanging views with journalists at Bangladesh Secretariat here on the first day at office after getting the charge of the road transport and bridges ministry for the fourth

term. "People are the source of our strength. We have very deep relations with this soil and people. The party which enjoys the confidence of people that never bows down to any pressure," he said. Noting that there are challenges in the fields of politics and economy in the days to come, the minister said many people predicted that AL would not be able to hold polls this time but with the participation of the people, the 12th parliamentary polls were held in a peaceful manner. He said there is conspiracy too to make harm to the country's economy. "We have courage to overcome it," he said. Asked about the BNP and like-minded parties' demand of re-

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Economic diplomacy would be Dhaka's major focus: Hassan Mahmud

STAFF REPORTER

Foreign minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday Monday said economic diplomacy would be the major focus of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's new government while Dhaka would continue to work with countries both in eastern and western hemispheres. "I will lay emphasis on economic diplomacy as my major focus," he said in his maiden interaction with the mainstream media after assuming the charge of his new portfolio. He said Dhaka was particularly keen to explore expanded economic ties with African and South American nations as part of the economic diplomacy. Mahmud said maintaining relations with countries in the East and Western hemispheres appeared as a major



challenge against the backdrop of growing global polarization. But, he said, Bangladesh would stick to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's doctrine

- friendship to all, malice towards none. "Different countries have different perspectives, narratives... We do value them and at the end of the day

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Rice prices up by Tk5 per kg

STAFF REPORTER

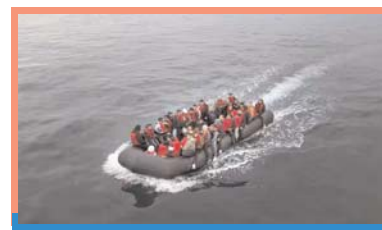
Rice prices also suddenly jumped after the 2018 elections Rice prices up by Tk5 per kg. Despite an adequate rice supply in the market, the price has increased by at least Tk5 per kg in both wholesale and retail markets. Traders attribute the price hike to syndicates and the recent national elections' aftermath, impacting prices at all levels. On last Saturday, markets in the capital, including Kawran Bazar, Farmgate, Agargaon, and Mirpur, witnessed miniket rice selling at Tk70 per kg, Bri-28 at Tk55, Nazirshail at Tk75-Tk80, local coarse rice at Tk50, and fine rice

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Four migrants die trying to cross English Channel in boat

BBC

Four migrants trying to cross the Channel have died in French waters, a French maritime official told the BBC. Around 70 people were trying to get into a small boat attempting to launch from a beach when it overturned in the early hours of Sunday morning, French media reports said. Dozens were pulled from the water during overnight rescue efforts in Wimereux, to the south of Calais. Foreign Secretary David Cameron said it was "heartbreaking". Local authorities say the four dead were from Iraq and Syria. One other person is in critical condition and has been transferred to a hospital in nearby Boulogne-sur-Mer, a spokesperson from the French maritime prefecture told the BBC. People got into trouble almost immediately after the boat departed the French coast for England at



around 02:00 local time (01:00 GMT). Dozens were trying to board the vessel as it left the beach and found themselves in difficulty at sea, the French maritime prefecture said. A tugboat patrolling the coast attended the scene and found the bodies. Around 50 firefighters and several police vehicles were deployed to help, according to regional newspaper La Voix du Nord. Dozens of survivors were taken to a local community centre, the paper reports. Rescue efforts continued at around 05:00, with several boats and a French Navy helicopter being deployed, the paper adds. The French coast guard, who also confirmed the deaths, said a helicopter is flying in the area. The UK Coastguard had no involvement as the incident occurred in French waters very close to the beach near Wimereux. Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said

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U.S. does not support Taiwan independence, Biden says

Reuters
U.S. President Joe Biden said on last Saturday the United States does not support the independence of Taiwan, after Taiwanese voters rebuffed China and gave the ruling party a third presidential term. Earlier in the day, the Taiwanese ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate Lai Ching-te came to power, strongly rejecting Chinese pressure to spurn him, and pledged both to stand up to Beijing and seek talks. "We do not support independence..." Biden said, when asked for reaction to Saturday's elections. The United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979 and has long said it does not support a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan. It does, however, maintain unofficial relations with the self-

governed island and remains its most important backer and arms supplier. Beijing, which has never renounced the use of force



to bring Taiwan under its control, fears that Lai could declare the establishment of a Republic of Taiwan, which Lai has said he will not do. Biden has previously upset the Chinese government with comments that appeared to suggest the United States would defend the

island if it were attacked, a deviation from a long-held U.S. position of "strategic ambiguity". His comments on Saturday appear to be an

effort to reassure Beijing. Even so, Washington warned just hours ahead of the polls opening that "it would be unacceptable" for "any" country to interfere in the election. Taiwan, which neighboring China claims as its own, has been a democratic success story since holding its first

direct presidential election in 1996, the culmination of decades of struggle against authoritarian rule and martial law. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken congratulated Lai Ching-te on his victory and said the United States "is committed to maintaining cross-strait peace and stability, and the peaceful resolution of differences, free from coercion and pressure." He said the U.S. looks forward to working with Lai and leaders of all parties in Taiwan to advance their "longstanding unofficial relationship, consistent with the U.S. one China policy." The Biden administration has feared that the election, transition and new administration would escalate conflict with Beijing. Biden has worked to smooth relations with China, including agreeing to talk through differences on

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Misuse of freedom of expression is harmful for democracy, people: Arafat

STAFF REPORTER

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mohammad Ali Arafat today said it is harmful for democracy and commoners as well if any individual or group of people misuses the freedom of expression, free flow of information and freedom of mass media through spreading propaganda and falsehood. "Such misdeeds will be brought under accountability," he said while exchanging views with reporters after taking charges of the ministry. Earlier, newly appointed Foreign Minister and outgoing Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud introduced the newly appointed state minister to heads of different departments and officials of the ministry. Senior Secretary of the ministry Humayun Kabir Khandaker conducted the programme. Dr Hasan said, "The newly

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Colombia landslide toll at 33 as rescuers work against clock



INTERNATIONAL DESK

Rescuers were working against the clock Saturday to find survivors of landslides that claimed at least 33 lives, mostly children, in northwestern Colombia, the country's vice president said Saturday. "I deeply regret the death of 33 people in this tragedy, mostly children, according to preliminary reports," Vice President Francia Marquez wrote on social media site X. Search teams -- including firefighters, soldiers and local residents -- slogged through deep mud and debris in hopes of finding survivors, while relatives stood nearby, some crying inconsolably, others tearfully hugging. Rescuers used stretchers to carry out bodies, while

a helicopter hovered overhead. "I don't even know what to think, I'm worried, looking for my relatives," Andres Asprilla told AFP. He said four family members were missing. Earlier, officials had put the toll in Friday's landslides, which hit a road linking the cities of Medellin and Quibdo in Choco department, at 23 dead and 20 injured. All available resources were being sent to the area, President Gustavo Petro said on social media Friday. As of early Saturday, 17 bodies had been transported to morgues and forensic examiners had identified five, authorities said. The landslides in Choco, which lies on the Pacific Ocean, followed more

than 24 hours of intense rain. A local official told AFP that many travelers, blocked by an earlier landslide Friday, had left their cars to take shelter in a house near the municipality of Carmen de Atrato. "But unfortunately, a landslide came and buried them," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Images shared on social networks showed part of a mountain breaking loose and crashing down onto a line of cars, as screams break out. - 'High risk' - Rescuers used sniffer dogs to locate those buried, and excavating equipment to gingerly remove the dirt. "We have been here since

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More queens in store for European royalty as Gen Z rises

INTERNATIONAL DESK

The abdication of Denmark's Queen Margrethe leaves Europe without a female monarch, but not for long -- a young generation of princesses born in the 21st century will be ascending to thrones across the continent in the coming years. Belgium's Princess Elisabeth, born in 2001; Catharina-Amalia of the Netherlands (2003); Ingrid Alexandra of Norway (2004); Leonor of Spain (2005); and Estelle of Sweden (2012) -- half of the hereditary monarchies on the Continent are likely to be led by a queen before too long. Many will be the first to take the throne after the introduction of female succession laws, a privilege previously reserved for male heirs. Previous queens, such as Elizabeth II of Britain, who died in 2022, had no brothers to inherit the throne. "Sweden was the first country in the world to adopt a gender-neutral order of succession, in 1980, when Princess Victoria bumped her younger brother down and she became crown princess" retroactively, Swedish royals expert Roger Lundgren told AFP.

- Modern monarchs - Several experts said gender was unlikely to have much of an impact as the future queens embrace their new roles. "Much of what kings and queens do today, and what they will do in 25 years, is what kings did 200 years ago too -- state visits, receiving ambassadors, ceremonial things," Lundgren said. Lundgren also noted that unlike earlier generations of queens, many in the upcoming generation has done some form of military service in their country. In December, for example, Spain's Hola! magazine showed Princess Leonor in combat camouflage taking part in ski drills with her unit on slopes in the Pyrenees. Other princesses have studied in elite schools at home or abroad -- both Leonor and Princess Elisabeth of Belgium studied at Atlantic College in Wales -- exposing them more to global affairs and concerns such as feminist causes or the risks from climate change. "A clearer, firmer footing in the everyday life of the people, in combination with the pomp, castles, jewels and

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Maldives won't be bullied, president says as India row deepens

AFP News

The Maldives may be small but will not be bullied, the president said after returning from China, where he signed a raft of



deals, as a row with New Delhi deepens. New Delhi considers the Indian Ocean archipelago to be within its sphere of influence but the country has shifted to China's orbit, the Maldives' largest external creditor. "We are not a country that is in the backyard of another country. We are an independent nation," Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu told reporters on his arrival home in Male on Saturday. "This territorial integrity policy is one that China respects", he said in the nation's Dhivehi language, the Mihaaru newspaper

reported late on Saturday. With Beijing and New Delhi tussling for influence, Muizzu was elected in September after pledging to cultivate "strong ties" with China

and eject Indian troops. "We may be small, but that doesn't give you the license to bully us," Muizzu said in a final comment in English. Muizzu has denied seeking to redraw the regional balance by bringing in Chinese forces to replace Indian troops. Muizzu's trip to China this week was his first state visit since becoming president, and the two sides issued a joint communique on Thursday detailing the "broad consensus" reached by their leaders. China's state broadcaster CCTV said deals included

"infrastructure construction, medical care and health care, improvement of people's livelihoods, new energy sources, agriculture and marine environmental protection" agreements. "Longstanding China-Maldives relations are built upon an exemplary model of mutual respect," Muizzu's office said. - 'Diminish reliance' - Tensions with New Delhi flared after three of Muizzu's junior ministers reportedly called Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "clown" and a "terrorist" in since-deleted social media posts earlier this month. Bollywood actors and some of India's cricket greats have responded with calls for compatriots to boycott their southern neighbour and instead book their next holidays closer to home. Tourism accounts for nearly a third of the Maldives' economy, with Indians making up the largest share of foreign arrivals. Muizzu said the Maldives will also slash reliance on India for healthcare and medicine, adding more countries where citizens needing government-paid health treatment abroad can go.

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Maize cultivation increases in Jamalpur

NEWS DESK

Maize cultivation has been increasing gradually in the district due to its excellent economic return in recent years. Farmers have brought extensive land under the maize cultivation here this year which also exceeded the target. Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) office sources said farmers have cultivated maize on 20,268 hectares of land this year which is more than the last year's cultivation target. As a result, farmers are expecting 2,17,070 tonnes

economy is putting more pressure on the economy. Chairman of the Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD), distinguished economist Prof. Rehman Subhan said, for planned urbanization, there should be coordination among the institutions working in the city. In the world's major cities, central management is emphasized. more cont...

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Want a single authority for all organizations in urban management - Professor Rehman Sobhan

Abu Bakar
Professor Rehman Subhan said this at the opening ceremony of the special conference organized by Bapa and Ben. He said these things at the Krishibid Institution auditorium of Khamarbari in the capital on Saturday. In the original article, Nazrul Islam, founder of BEN, said Dhaka's 'over-aging'

may be rain. After the rains there may again be a severe winter effect. The rest of the month can be very cold. At this time, cold weather may flow in the south of the country. For the past three days, the severity of winter has increased greatly in Barisal division, and the suffering of the displaced people has increased. A lot of people in Patuakhali have lost their lives due to severe winter and continuous thick fog. The people of this district are suffering from bone-chilling winter with snowy wind and thick fog. However, children and old people are getting sick due to cold due to various reasons. It has caused outbreaks of cold, cough and asthma. The middle-aged and old people of day laborer families have become unemployed. It can be seen in different upazilas of Patuakhali district, the cold current has descended across the upazila of Bauful, Dasmina, Dumki, Mirzaganj, Galachipa, Kalapara and Patuakhali Sadar in the district. The public life of

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North Korea fires 'unidentified ballistic missile': Seoul military

AFP

North Korea fired a ballistic missile on Sunday, Seoul's military said, days after Pyongyang staged live-fire exercises near the tense maritime border with South Korea. 'North Korea fires unidentified ballistic missile towards East Sea,' Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement, referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan. The Joint Chiefs of Staff said had it detected the launch but gave no further details. Japan's coast guard said that an 'object, potentially ballistic missile, launched from North Korea,' citing information from the country's defence ministry, and warning vessels to take care. North Korea's last missile test was



comes days after North Korea conducted a series of rare live-fire drills near the maritime border with the South, prompting counter-exercises and evacuation orders for

some South Korean border islands. Leader Kim Jong Un also earlier this week branded Seoul his 'principal enemy' and warned he would not hesitate to annihilate the South, as he toured major weapons factories. 'The historic time has come at last when we should define as a state most hostile toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the entity called the Republic of Korea (South Korea),' Kim was reported Wednesday as saying by the official Korean Central News Agency. Analysts said at the time that the shift was significant, signifying a shift in Pyongyang's approach to Seoul into 'ultra-hawkish mode'. Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in decades, after Kim enshrined

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Robbery with barricade on Manda road in Naogaon

M REZAUL ISLAM

In Manda of Naogaon, several vehicles including private cars were robbed by cutting trees and barricading the road. The members of the bandits held the drivers of the vehicles hostage and looted money. It is said that some drivers were also beaten up at this time. The incident of robbery took place on the Deluabari-Chowbaria road of the upazila around 4 am on Sunday. Doctor Fazle Rabbi, who was under the grip of dacoits, said, "After completing an

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South Bengal Patuakhali severe winter life disrupted

MD RIAZUR RAHMAN

Dense fog and severe winter are sitting all over the country. South Bengal Patuakhali district is not able to see the sun due to thick fog. As a result, the cold is almost the same during the day and night. People of different professions have suffered in severe winter. Daily Janbani correspondents from Barisal, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Bhola, Barguna and Patuakhali also said in the information sent by the representatives that people of all professions are coming out of the house less due to winter this year. The livelihood and income of the working class people has decreased a lot. At the same time, the number of children and elderly patients in Patuakhali District Hospital is increasing. Meteorological department of Patuakhali district says that this severe winter may last two to three more days. And also said that from 17th to 19th January of this month, the sky will be cloudy and there

may be rain. After the rains there may again be a severe winter effect. The rest of the month can be very cold. At this time, cold weather may flow in the south of the country. For the past three days, the severity of winter has increased greatly in Barisal division, and the suffering of the displaced people has increased. A lot of people in Patuakhali have lost their lives due to severe winter and continuous thick fog. The people of this district are suffering from bone-chilling winter with snowy wind and thick fog. However, children and old people are getting sick due to cold due to various reasons. It has caused outbreaks of cold, cough and asthma. The middle-aged and old people of day laborer families have become unemployed. It can be seen in different upazilas of Patuakhali district, the cold current has descended across the upazila of Bauful, Dasmina, Dumki, Mirzaganj, Galachipa, Kalapara and Patuakhali Sadar in the district. The public life of

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Govt must punish

the same thing this time in the name of movement to prevent the 12th parliamentary election what they had done in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

A mother taking her child in lap had been burn to death in a fire set to a train and none can tolerate such a scene, she said. "They are doing movement for democracy despite the fact that they even don't know how to spell the democracy," she said. The Prime Minister said the people of the country did not response to BNP-Jamaat's call to prevent the parliamentary election, by balloting spontaneously. After forming the government for the record fifth term and fourth in a row, the Prime Minister went to Gopalganj to visit her Tungipara-Kotalipara constituency to pay homage to the Father of the Nation at his mausoleum in Tungipara alongside exchanging greetings and views with party leaders and activists. She spent Saturday night at her own home in Tungipara and is scheduled to reach her official Ganabhaban residence tonight. The Awami League had won the 12th parliamentary election with landslide victory getting 222 parliamentary seats out of 298. Kotalipara AL President Babu Bhabendranath Bishwas chaired the meeting while its General Secretary Aynal Hossain Sheikh conducted it. Leaders of AL and its associate bodies greeted the premier with flower bouquets separately on her reelection as the Prime Minister for fifth time and fourth consecutive term. Sheikh Helal Uddin, MP, and Sheikh Salauddin Jewel, MP, were present on dais while Awami League advisory council member Akram Uddin Ahmed, Gopalganj Awami League president Mahbub Ali Khan and PM's political representative in her Gopalganj-3 constituency Shahidullah Khandaker also spoke at the programme. Sheikh Hasina said no country can make progress without a democratic government or political leaders in power.

PM for taking projects

only rather to consider how much the people of the locality will be benefitted. She gave the instructions while addressing the local administration at Tungipara in Gopalganj district. Sheikh Hasina asked the local administration to work with confidence, belief and self dignity while performing any professional duty without hesitating about what the people will say. "Many people had said that it would not work or that would not be effective, but we have done it," she said. Many countries did not even think Bangladesh had progressed so much in the last 15 years, she added. The Prime Minister said, "We don't bother what the people are saying. We will do whatever required to be done for the welfare of the country and its people."

Finance Minister

efforts to curb commodity prices would be a top priority during the upcoming Holy Month of Ramadan. "I think there is no such solution where everything can be resolved after taking office a day before. Please give me some time and our team some time...We'll keep in mind the ensuing month of Ramadan," he said. In this regard, he noted that the Ministry of Finance in together with the Ministry of Commerce would work to keep the prices of commodities under control. "The Finance Ministry and the Commerce Ministry will have to work together. None can accomplish such task of controlling price of

commodities alone..."

he added. Replying to another question about his possible steps to bring back the laundered money back, Ali said it would take some time to frame the strategic work plan in this regard. He told another questioner that the Taka has devalued against US Dollar not only in the country, but also in the neighboring countries. "Please give us some time, it's not possible to address all things in one day," Mahmood Ali, who served as the chairman on the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Finance in the immediate past government, said that he was trying to understand the problems and issues of the economy and thus try to address those. "I will try my level best. Whatever the Prime Minister had given me the responsibilities, I had delivered those at my best. So, I'm not a man to sit idle," he said. Ali, who had previously served the Bangladesh government as foreign minister, said that upon his appointment as the new finance minister, he has hardly got any time to think afresh as thousands of people came to him to extend their unwavering support. Earlier in the day, the newly-appointed finance minister stepped into his office. To keep the new finance minister updated, a joint briefing was prepared by the ministry's four divisions-- Finance, Financial Institutions, Internal Resources and Economic Relations.

Road accidents

28.41% on regional highways, and 28.5% on feeder roads. Within metropolitan areas, Dhaka accounted for 6.32% of accidents, and Chattogram registered 1.11%.

ICCB calls for immediate

said the ICCB in its editorial of the current news bulletin released on yesterday Sunday. It is now almost three months that the war broke out between Israel and Hamas, the militant Islamist Group that has been controlling Gaza since 2006. Since 7 October, 2023 barbaric massacre of the Palestinian, in particular new born babies & children, women & civilians have been continuing.

So far, a total of 21,822 Palestinians have been killed and 56,451 wounded. Hospitals, schools, residential houses including war shelters and almost every infrastructure have been destroyed by both air and ground offensive. In a latest statement the Israeli authorities have announced that the war will continue in 2024, according to the editorial.

Govt is able

election, he said these are baseless demands. He said every party must have to make democratic practice to go to power. "The country is of all. People are the owner of the all resources and properties of this country. Those who are in opposition are also part of this," he said. He hoped they would be able to translate their dream of Vision 2041 into reality with the support of people. Noting the sufficiency of food items and fruits up to rural markets, the minister said they would put much emphasis on controlling prices of essentials to ease the sufferings of the low-income group. He said bringing discipline on streets will be a big challenge ahead as he admitted that it is yet to be done fully. "We have adopted a plan with the funding of the World Bank. Once the plan is implemented, hopefully road safety will be ensured successfully," he said.

Economic diplomacy

we will work with all (of them)," Mahmud said. The minister said the new government was not feeling any external pressure as countries in both east and western nations by now showed their interest to work with Dhaka. He said the elections were free and fair and envoys of the US, UK and all other countries have congratulated the new government and expressed their willingness to work with Dhaka. Mahmud said under Sheikh Hasina's premiership Bangladesh was strengthened relations with both the east and west. Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and Maritime Affairs Unit Secretary Rear Admiral (retd) Khurshed Alam were present during the interaction.

Rice prices

at Tk130-Tk135. Besides, the price of each 50kg bag of rice has risen by Tk250-Tk300. At the wholesale level, prices have increased by Tk4-Tk6 per kg over the past week. Lokman Hossain, general secretary of Karwan Bazar Rice Traders Association, told that the price of rice usually increases before the arrival of Boro season. "But, this time, the price of rice is being increased at the mill level in the full season of Aman. We have to buy rice at millgates for Tk4-6 more," he said. Salimul Haque, a retail trader in Agargaon, told they had to increase prices in the last three days as they have to pay Tk4 more to buy from wholesalers. The harvest of rice in the Aman season is almost at the end. According to official estimates, this year's production of Aman exceeded all previous records. Almost 40% of the total rice production in the country happens during the Aman harvest season (November and December), according to the Directorate of Agricultural Extension (DAE). AKM Khorshed Alam Khan, president of the Auto Rice Mill Owners' Association, highlighted that rice prices also experienced a sudden increase after the 2018 elections. He said syndicates make huge profits by taking advantage of opportunities during the transition of the cabinet. Price jumps outside Dhaka Kushtia, a major market for fine rice, saw a Tk4 per kg increase last week, with miniket rice now selling at Tk66.

Four migrants

the Channel deaths "must be a wake up call to take decisive action" - including the provision of safe route for those fleeing war-torn countries. The deaths come one day after the first small boat crossing of the year was recorded. It follows a nearly four-week period up to 11 January when no crossings to the UK were recorded, which the Home Office says was due to poor weather conditions. The provisional total for 2023 - 29,437 crossings - is down on the record 45,774 crossings recorded for the whole of 2022. But last year's total is still the second highest annual number of crossings on record. Speaking to the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg, Lord Cameron said it was "heartbreaking" to hear more lives had been lost in Channel waters. He said the British government had done "a huge amount" to support French authorities with policing and intelligence operations. And he insisted that passing the UK government's Rwanda bill - which aims to send some asylum seekers to the African country - was "essential" to save lives and stop people crossing the Channel on small boats. The bill is designed to discourage migrants from trying to cross the Channel in small boats.

U.S. does not

security matters at a California summit with President Xi Jinping in November. Taiwan's government expects China to attempt to put pressure on its incoming president after the vote, including staging military maneuvers near the island this spring, two senior government officials said. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. In a show of support for the government, Biden plans to dispatch an unofficial delegation to the self-governed island, according to a senior Biden administration official. The delegation is likely to include some former high-ranking American officials, according to the official, who said the names have not been finalized. Similar delegations have been sent to Taiwan in the past. China was angered in 2016 when then-President-elect Donald Trump spoke by phone with President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, the first such conversation between U.S. and Taiwan leaders since President Jimmy Carter switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979.

Misuse of freedom of

appointed state minister for information is a prudent person and my copartner for long." Arafat said free flow of information and freedom of expression are parts of the spirit of the great Liberation War. "We've ensured those for the progress of the country and for the interest of democracy and we want to keep it up in the upcoming days. But spread false propaganda and deceiving people are injustice," he said. The state minister said, "I want to work in the upcoming days on how to bring untrue and disinformation into accountability to facilitate the free flow of information in a better way. Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) Managing Director and Chief Editor Abul Kalam Azad, Chief Information Commissioner Dr Abdul Malek and heads of different departments under the ministry were present.

Colombia landslide

three in the morning, and at around six the relief

Sad News

Former businessman Miar Uddin, a resident of Kulia village, is no more.

A former prominent businessman of Tonki Bazaar, Md. Miar Uddin Mondal, a resident of Kulia village of Melandah Upazila Kulia Union of Jamalpur District, is no more. He passed away on January 13 at around 1:30 am at his home. Inna-Lillah wa Inna Haihe Rajiun. He was 80 years old at the time of his death. At the time of his death, he left behind numerous merits including 4 sons, wife, grandson, granddaughter. His funeral prayers were held today on January 13 at 2:30 PM and he was buried in his own family graveyard. Former chairman of Kulia Union Parishad, distinguished social worker Alhaj Fazlur Rahman Karda, nephew of the deceased, distinguished journalist The Daily Evening News, The Daily Times of Bangladesh, Dainik Navchetna, Dainik Khabarpatra Poikar Jamalpur correspondent journalist Md. Ruhul Amin Raju, Kulia Union expressed deep grief over his death. Awami League Vice President Professor MA Mannan, Kulia Union Awami League Joint General Secretary Md. Zakyul Islam Sonahar, deceased's younger brother Mofazzal Hossain Saheb Ali, deceased's elder son Md. Anwar Hossain Dulal, Tonki Bazaar businessman Dr. Hanif Uddin and many others. In the condolence message, condolence was expressed to the bereaved family, along with seeking forgiveness for the departed soul.

agencies arrived and the search and removal of the bodies began," said Sneider Palacios, who lost a cousin. It was "very hard," he added. Clara Estrada reached the scene at 5 am to search for her nephew. "We don't know anything, whether he's alive or dead," she said. The bodies that were carried out, Estrada added, "none of them were him." Meanwhile, the Ombudsman's Office warned of "high risk of new landslides." "We call for all necessary actions to be taken in order to safeguard the lives of people who are at risk in the area," it said in a bulletin. A landslide in the same part of Colombia in December 2022 killed at least 27 people, trapping people in a bus and other vehicles. While much of Colombia is suffering through drought, meteorologists have warned of the risk of heavy rains in several departments bordering the Pacific.

Maldives won't be

Most eligible citizens currently get treatment in India, as well as small numbers in Sri Lanka and Thailand, officials said. But Muizzu said the government would "diminish reliance on... a select group of countries", without specifically mentioning India, and would now support treatment also in the United Arab Emirates. Most pharmaceuticals in the Maldives are currently imported from India, and Male will now seek to import medicines from the United States and European nations, he said. At the same time, Muizzu, the former capital's mayor, suffered his first electoral setback as his party's candidate lost the vote to replace him. Adam Azim of the former ruling Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), which is seen as more pro-Indian, won the seat.

Maize cultivation

maize this year, the DAE sources added. The office said farmers cultivated maize on 7,075 hectares of land in Dewanganj upazila, 3,350 hectares in Bakshiganj, 2,918 hectares in Sarishabari, 2,850 hectares in Madarganj, 2,050 hectares in Islampur, 1,230 hectares in Jamalpur sadar and 795 hectares in Melandah upazila of the district. Deputy Director of the DAE Zakia Sultana said we are encouraging farmers to

North Korea

the country's permanent status as a nuclear power into the constitution and test-fired several advanced intercontinental ballistic missiles. Last year, Pyongyang also successfully put a reconnaissance satellite into orbit, after receiving what South Korea claimed was Russian assistance, in exchange for arms shipments for Moscow's war in Ukraine. Kim has also test-fired a string of advanced intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) including a purported solid fuel version. At Pyongyang's year-end policy meetings, Kim threatened a nuclear attack on the South and called for a build-up of his country's military arsenal ahead of armed conflict that he warned could 'break out any time'. Pyongyang declared itself an 'irreversible' nuclear power in 2022 and has repeatedly said it will never give up its nuclear weapons programme, which the regime views as essential for its survival. The United Nations Security Council has adopted many resolutions calling on North Korea to halt its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes since Pyongyang first conducted a nuclear test in 2006.

Robbery with

operation at Mahanagar Clinic in Rajshahi's Tanor Upazila Sadar, I left for Mishat Clinic at Deluabari Bazar in Manda Upazila around 3 o'clock in the night. A group of dacoits intercepted my private car near Dafadar junction on Deluabari-Chaubaria road around 4 am. At that time, a tree was barricaded on the road. The victim doctor, Fazle Rabbi, also said, "The robbers put a knife on my throat and looted 35,000 rupees in my wallet. At this time they robbed 5 to 6 vehicles. Taking the opportunity, I turned the private car and headed towards Chowbaria again. Later I called 999 and asked for police assistance. On Sunday morning, the police took a statement from me. Another victim, Afaz Uddin Pramanik, the driver of the boat, said, "I leave home early on Sunday morning to catch fish." On the way, I fell under the hands of a group of robbers near Barabrij, near Dafadar junction. The robbers tied my hands, put a knife to my throat, snatched two mobile phones and threw them into the water. After the robbers left, others freed me. In this regard, Manda Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mozammel Haque Qazi said that the robbers were trapped before the police reached the spot after receiving the news. Efforts are underway to identify and arrest those involved in the incident.

South Bengal

the districts and upazilas has come to a standstill due to severe winter and continuous thick fog. At the same time, the town is covered in thick fog. Due to thick fog, the vehicles move with headlights on till noon seen to do. It has become a responsibility to save people's lives due to the severity of winter. The family of Md. Sakur Ahmed of Chalila Bunia village of Rangabali upazila said, we are hardworking people. If we don't work every day, our family won't survive. We have not been able to go to work for several days due to excessive fog and extreme cold wind. The people of this Deep region are not getting any support from the government either. Md. Rashid Uddin, businessman of Bablatla village of Kalapara upazila, said, we run our family every day with business. However, due to heavy fog and cold these two or three days, hands and feet are paralyzed due to which businesses are closed. I cannot do business and all kinds of activities.

More queens

the fairy tale, is the winning concept to keep the monarchy," said Ebba Kleberg von Sydow, a Swedish influencer and royals expert. She said the future queens were likely to prove more media-savvy as well, if only to show that monarchies remain grounded and relevant in modern society. Lundgren noted that while Queen Margrethe "doesn't even own a smartphone, and is proud of it", Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik and Norway's Crown Prince Haakon have their own WhatsApp group. "You need to be on more platforms, have your message reach people in a completely different way, now that traditional media channels that previous generations of royals used no longer reach everyone," von Sydow said.

NOTICE BY LIQUIDATOR

At an Extra - Ordinary General Meeting of the **Runi Metal Industries Limited** duly convened and held at the Registered Office of the Company on **14-01-2024** It has been resolved that **Runi Metal Industries Limited, C-164260/2020 Dated: 06.10.2020** has been put into Members' Voluntary Winding up and **Abul Kashem, Managing Director of Runi Metal Industries Limited, 28/C, Satish Sarker Road, Gandaria, Dhaka- 1204** has been appointed as Liquidator of the Company.

(Abul Kashem)
Liquidator & Managing Director

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Veterinary Surgeon
Government Goat Development Farm, Hathazari, Chattogram
Department of Livestock Services (DLS)
Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Date: 14-January-2024

Invitation for Re-Tender

This is an online tender, where only Re-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no hard copies will be accepted. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Ref No.	Name of Tender	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening & Closing Date & Time
1	934946 33.01.0000.300.02.006.20-07	Procurement of Wheat Bran, Khasari Bran, Premix and Soyabean meal.	24-Jan-2024 12.00 PM	24-Jan-2024 14.00 PM
2	934948 33.01.0000.300.02.006.20-08	Procurement of Chola But, DCP, Whole Maize and Salt.	24-Jan-2024 12.00 PM	24-Jan-2024 14.10 PM

Md. Kanti Modak
Veterinary Surgeon (Ad. Ch.)
Govt. Goat Development Farm
Hathazari, Chattogram.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
District Primary Education Office
Netrokona.
www.dpe.netrokona.gov.bd

Memo No. 38.01.7200.000.07.001.24. 58 Date: 11.01.2024

e-Tender (Re-Tender) Notice No. 05.2023-24

e-Tender (Re-Tender) is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following works:

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Tender ID NO	Package No	Tender/Proposal Document Last selling/downloading Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time	Remarks
1	Need Based Infrastructure Development of Gov. Primary Schools Project (1 st Phase)	929616	NBIDGPS-1/G1.0163	30 Jan- 2024 16.00	31 Jan- 2024 14.00	OTM
2	Need Based Infrastructure Development of Gov. Primary Schools Project (1 st Phase)	929617	NBIDGPS-1/G1.0164	30 Jan- 2024 16.00	31 Jan- 2024 14.00	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no of line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the national e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for Tender/Proposal Document to be deposited Online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

(Md. Mizanur Rahman Khan)
District Primary Education Officer
Netrokona.

Taylor Swift's influence attracts conspiracy theories

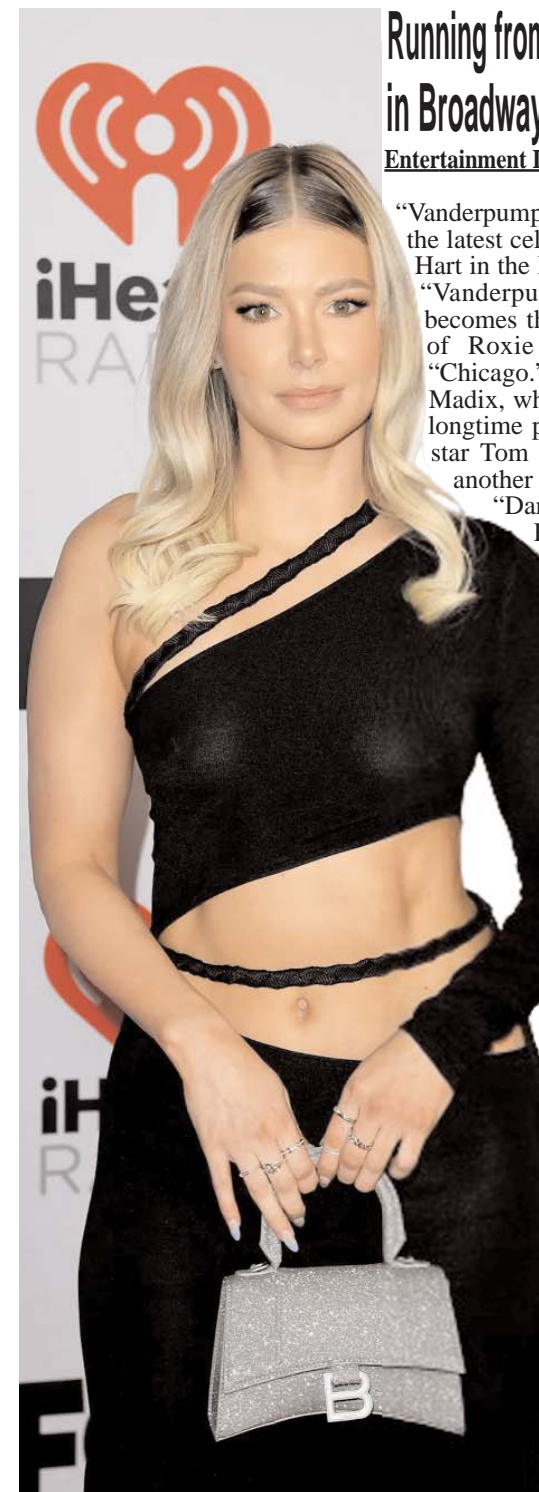
AFP
 A Fox News host suggested this week that Taylor Swift is a "front for a covert political agenda," echoing disinformation that has percolated in right-wing circles for months—and which experts say will likely get worse before the 2024 US election.
 The Jesse Watters segment warning Swift could be a "Pentagon asset" offered the latest conspiracy theory exploiting the singer-songwriter's fame and her past support for Democrats such as President Joe Biden.
 Attacks targeting Swift in recent months have ranged from personal barbs to accusations of witchcraft and speculation about her political involvement.
 "Have you ever wondered why or how she blew up like this? Well, around four years ago, the Pentagon psychological operations unit floated turning Taylor Swift into an asset during a NATO meeting," Watters said Tuesday, Jan. 9, resurfacing a clip from a 2019 summit by NATO's cyber defense hub.
 But the video's only mention of Swift comes during a presentation on how social influence could counter misinformation, when a researcher unaffiliated with NATO cited the singer as an example of a popular celebrity.
 "As for this conspiracy theory, we are going to shake it off," Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh told AFP, referencing one of Swift's hits.
 Watters also brought up a reported traffic surge on Vote.org in September—immediately after Swift posted an Instagram Story encouraging fans to participate in National Voter Registration Day—to posit that someone "got to her from the White House or from wherever."
 Reached by AFP, Swift publicist Tree Paine pointed to the nonprofit CEO's response to Watters's claims.
 "Our partnership with @taylorswift13 is helping all Americans make their voices heard at the ballot box," Andrea Hailey said on X, formerly Twitter. "Not a psy-op or a Pentagon asset."
 Watters—whose primetime show is the second-most watched cable news show in the United States, drawing an average audience of nearly 2.5 million viewers—conceded later during the segment that he "obviously has no evidence" for the claims.
 Fox News declined to comment on the record for this story.
Exploiting celebrity
 Already a megastar, Swift's stature grew in 2023, as she broke music records, performed the highest-grossing music tour in history and began dating American football player Travis Kelce. Time magazine named her Person of the Year.
 As Swift's star rose, so did attacks against her. Fringe influencers such as far-right radio host Stew Peters accused her of witchcraft at concerts and claimed she was "responsible for murder" after Kelce appeared in a vaccine ad.
 Doctored images shared online falsely linked her to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, while several conservative commentators have insulted her private life and appearance. Activist Charlie Kirk asked on one podcast if she has "any eggs left."
 "The way in which it is happening is very gendered because it is relatively easier to attach incredulous disinformation claims to female celebrities," said Swapnil Rai, an assistant media professor at the University of Michigan.
 Claims that Swift is a Democratic operative were bubbling up online before Watters mainstreamed them.
 "I SAID IT FROM THE BEGINNING," a top promoter of the QAnon conspiracy theory said after Watters's segment. "Not only is Taylor ADMITTEDLY a satanic witch, but she's also being used as a PENTAGON PSYOP ASSET to swing MANY THOUSANDS of youth votes over to the Democrats."
'MAGA vs Swifties'
 Laura Loomer, a far-right former congressional candidate who has repeatedly amplified the "psyop" claims, has said that "2024 will be MAGA vs Swifties."
 The superstar is likely to play a role in the election—albeit not as a "Pentagon asset."
 "I cannot think of another celebrity whose endorsement and activities on



Entertainment Desk

Running from gossip, Ariana Madix finds relief in Broadway's salacious musical, 'Chicago'

Entertainment Desk



"Vanderpump Rules" star Ariana Madix becomes the latest celebrity to take on the role of Roxie Hart in the Broadway musical, "Chicago."
 "Vanderpump Rules" star Ariana Madix becomes the latest celebrity to take on the role of Roxie Hart in the Broadway musical, "Chicago." The show comes at a good time for Madix, who found out in the past year that her longtime partner and "Vanderpump Rules" co-star Tom Sandoval was cheating on her with another co-star. Madix hopes that her stint on "Dancing with the Stars" and playing Roxie in "Chicago" will continue the trend of her being associated with something other than gossip and tabloid headlines. "If I am in the papers, it'll be for things that are positive. It'll be for the work that I'm doing. It will be for more things like this and hopefully less things that are not fun," Madix told The Associated Press at a recent press day for the show. She says that appearing on the reality television show taught her how to be herself, and that's something she plans on bringing to her version of Roxie, which she stars in starting Jan. 29 for eight weeks. "The Ariana Roxie is going to be unlike anyone else, because we're all different people and we're all going to bring our own experiences to it. So, I'm really looking forward to that." et in the 1920s, the musical is a scathing satire of how show business and the media make celebrities out of criminals. It has Bob Fosse-inspired choreography, skimpy outfits and killer songs such as "All That Jazz" and "Cell Block Tango." On the Broadway stage, Madix is surrounded by an entire cast, so she expects the run to be "really fun." But that doesn't mean she won't react to her nerves.

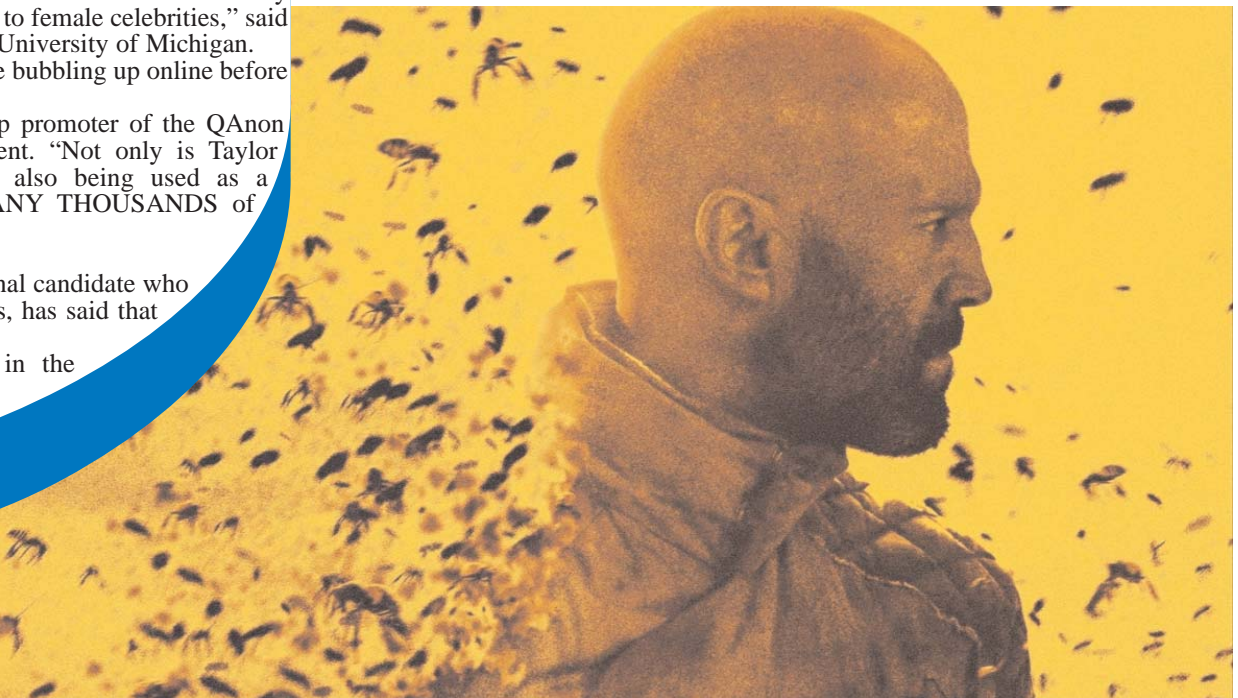
The background actor alleged Goth "intentionally kicked" him in the head during filming which left him with "head trauma symptoms" like disorientation
 By Kimberlee Speakman
 A background actor in the movie filed a lawsuit against Goth, 30, accusing the Infinity Pool actress of committing battery against him and getting him wrongfully terminated from the film after he filed a complaint against her. He also named the film's writer and director Ti West and film studio A24 as defendants in the lawsuit. In the lawsuit obtained by PEOPLE, the background actor named James Hunter, claimed that he was hired for three days in April to play a "Dead Parishioner" in the A24 horror film, which is about a girl who survived a massacre. He alleges that he was ordered to lay in the dirt on set "for several hours" and that he endured "ants and mosquitoes," as Goth ran past him on the ground for the scene.
 Hunter alleges that in t h e

Mia Goth Sued for Alleged Battery and Wrongful Termination by Extra on MaXXXine



Entertainment Desk

fourth take, Goth nearly stepped on him, and he had informed the second assistant director of the film who "warned" the actress to "be careful regarding how she stepped," per the filing. He then alleged that Goth "intentionally kicked" him in the head with her foot during the next take. See 'X' and 'Pearl' Star Mia Goth Return in 'MaXXXine' First Look Photo with Halsey After she kicked him, he said he experienced a "headache" and "stiffness in his neck," which he reported to the second assistant director, who notified Goth and West. He also noted that no medical assistance was offered to him on set, and West proceeded to film until they completed the scene. Hunter said his symptoms progressed and he experienced "lightheadedness" and "nearly passed out twice," adding, per the filing, that he had to pull over both times while he was driving home from the movie set. The background actor also alleged that Goth "invaded" his privacy in the bathroom on the set and "laughed," "taunted," "mocked," "belittled" him, and even "dared" him to "do anything about it." The next day, Hunter claimed that he was informed by a casting agency via email that "he had been taken off" for the "remaining two days of production" and "banned" from the movie set with "no reason" given. Over the next 48 hours, he said he continued to experience "head trauma symptoms" like "loss of memory, confusion, and disorientation," and eventually went to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a "concussion." He also alleged that he had "bruises and red marks" on his head after the kick. "As a result of being kicked in the head by defendant Goth, Plaintiff suffered, and has continued to suffer, symptoms of head trauma, including disorientation, vertigo, migraines, nightmares and severe emotional distress," the lawsuit claimed. Never miss a story—sign up for PEOPLE's free daily newsletter to stay up-to-date on the best of what PEOPLE has to offer, from juicy celebrity news to compelling human interest stories. representatives for Goth did not immediately respond to PEOPLE's request for comment. Hunter said in the lawsuit he is seeking \$250,000



Review: In the bonkers 'The Beekeeper,' Jason Statham has more than a bee in his bonnet

AP
 Secret agents and murderous assassins seem to lurk in increasingly mundane places. Remember "The Accountant" with Ben Affleck? Or "The Tax Collector" with Shia LaBeouf? Or more recently, how about "The Bricklayer" with Adam Eckhardt? You probably don't — none of these films were exactly Oscar winners. But there's probably a notary public somewhere wondering when he's going to get his Liam Neeson treatment. "The Beekeeper," the new Jason Statham revenge thriller, may have them all beaten — or at least bee-ten. The film, directed by David Ayer (who also did "The Tax Collector") has found probably the widest disparity yet between innocuous occupation and savage killer. As bodies accrue, so do the double takes from those confused by the source of all the mayhem. Again and again they utter in disbelief: "A beekeeper?"
 Believe it, honey. "The Beekeeper" carries that ludicrous premise as far as it can, and then well beyond. If you've been searching for a movie where Jason Statham gravely vows to "protect the hive" an implausible number of times, you have found it. The bee metaphors — there is even, rather impressively, a "To bee or not to bee" reference — come fast and furious in "The Beekeeper," a movie that flirts with a so-bad-it's-good vibe but is too serious to quite pull it off. It can be divertingly bonkers, but ends up a rather grim and slipshod "John Wick" ripoff. The film, scripted by Kurt Wimmer, begins the action with one of the more absurd inciting incidents in recent memory. Statham is a humble beekeeper for Eloise Parker (Phylicia Rashad) on a New England farm. She soon falls victim to a phishing scam that robs her of all her money, including the \$2 million charity fund she manages. Eloise calls a number that pops up on her screen and is talked into sharing her passwords by a smarmy scammer (David Witts) who's simultaneously using the call as a lesson to a room full of hackers who cheer him on like the predatory stock brokers of "The Wolf of Wall Street."
 Eloise doesn't press CTRL-ALT-DELETE or even call the fraud department of her bank. She kills herself. And guess who's mad? The beekeeper.
 Eloise's daughter, Verona (a good Emmy Raver-Lampman), is an FBI agent who throws herself into the case. But meanwhile Statham's beekeeper, after a well-placed call, gets the location of the call center. He turns up with a few tanks of gasoline and some terse words about, you know, the hive, and burns down the place, killing a few people along the way.
 That brings the attention of higher-ups. Only the guy in charge is a 28-year-old twerp named Derek Danforth (Josh Hutcherson, enjoying himself) who brashly underestimates his new enemy at every step of the way. His entitlement is owed to his rather good connections. He's protected by the former head of the CIA, Wallace Westwyld (Jeremy Irons) and happens to be the son of the U.S. president (Jemma Redgrave). Fingers get cut off and bodies accumulate as our man — his name turns out to be Adam Clay — tears through the criminal apparatus with ruthless blunt force. Statham, who has both the look and personality of a bullet, dispatches anyone in his path with the kind efficiency I dream of bringing to opening a pickle jar. A few twists of the wrist and he's done. Clay, brace yourselves, isn't just an actual beekeeper. He's a retired Beekeeper, an elite, clandestine secret service that operates well off the government books and that adopts a surprising amount of its mission statements from the natural way of bees. They have a whole secret order and stuff, bringing "The Beekeeper" into plainly "Wick"-ian — and less fun — territory.
 Yes, this silly beekeeper thriller goes all the way to the top. As the movie's renegade protagonist makes his way closer and closer to the White House, with blood and chaos in his wake, "The Beekeeper" begins to feel like an uncomfortable B-movie crosspollination of today's conspiracy theory-marred political landscape, with a violent, self-appointed guardian of America slashing his way toward the president. Most of the dead bodies are secret service.
 Disquieting thoughts, maybe, for a beekeeper movie. Ayer's movie is mostly just having some cynical world-building fun, even if its hero feels like a part more suited to Mr. Bean. And, besides, while John Wick was first propelled into action by the death of his dog, Clay doesn't bat an eye when his honeycombs get blown to smithereens. This guy doesn't even really care about bees. "The Beekeeper" an MGM release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for strong violence throughout, pervasive language, some sexual references and drug use. Running time: 105 minutes. Two stars out of four.