





Zero dengue deaths after 169 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh saw no deaths from dengue in 24 hours, a first since June 29, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

However, public health experts are advising caution in interpreting the data.

The data DGHS provided is from Friday and yesterday was Victory Day, which is also a public holiday, said Mushtaq Hossain, a public health expert.

Subsequently, he suggested observing the death toll for at least a week to declare any sort of success in the fight against dengue.

Lenin Chowdhury, another public health expert, highlighted the shift in dengue's pattern this year: it has become a nuisance all year round rather than a seasonal problem.

Dengue has claimed 1,678 lives and infected nearly 318,982 individuals in 2023, making it the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000.

"When we see the previous year's data, we can see that there was no death toll in the month of December. So, we don't need to be so happy to see no death in 24

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Thousands of BNP activists thronged the party's Nayapaltan headquarters in the capital yesterday and brought out a procession in celebration of the Victory Day.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

EC to survey polls readiness in districts

Views-exchange meets start from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chief Election Commissioner and four other commissioners will visit different districts to oversee the poll preparedness and witness the situation on the ground.

The CEC and the commissioners will make separate visits to interact with the candidates, election officials as well as law enforcers, EC officials said.

All candidates will be allowed to conduct election campaigns from tomorrow after the returning officers allocate symbols.

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir will start visiting districts today, the last date for withdrawal of candidature for the January 7 polls.

He will hold view exchange meetings with election officials and law enforcers in Gazipur in the morning and Narsingdi in the afternoon.

He will hold similar programmes at Kishoreganj tomorrow and at Narayanganj the day after tomorrow.

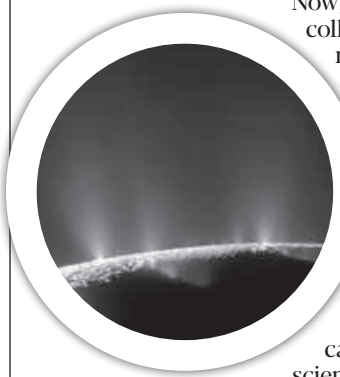
CEC Kazi Habibul Awal, along with another Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana, will hold view exchange programmes with candidates, election officials and law

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Saturn's moon Enceladus may have everything for life

CNN ONLINE

Scientists have long viewed Saturn's moon Enceladus, which harbours an ocean beneath its thick, icy shell, as one of the best places to search for life beyond Earth.



Now, a new analysis of data collected by Nasa's Cassini mission, which orbited Saturn and its moons between 2004 and 2017, has uncovered intriguing evidence that further supports the idea of Enceladus as a habitable ocean world.

Enceladus initially captured the attention of scientists in 2005 because plumes of ice grains and water vapor were observed rising through cracks in the moon's ice shell and releasing into space. The spacecraft flew through the plumes and "sampled" them, with data suggesting the presence of organic compounds within the plumes, some of which are key for life.

The latest data analysis of Cassini's flybys of Enceladus revealed the detection of a molecule called hydrogen cyanide that's toxic to humans but crucial to processes driving the origin of life. What's more, the team also found evidence to support that Enceladus' ocean has organic compounds that provide a source of chemical energy that could potentially be used as powerful fuel for any form of life.

A study detailing the findings was published Thursday in the journal Nature Astronomy.

Hostages killed by Israel had a white flag

AGENCIES

The Israeli army said yesterday that three hostages mistakenly killed by soldiers carried a white flag and cried for help in Hebrew.

Yotam Haim, Alon Shamriz and Samer El-Talalqa -- all in their 20s -- were shot during operations in Gaza City on Friday, sparking protests in Israel.

They were among about 250 people taken hostage during Palestinian militant group Hamas's October 7 attacks in Israel, which killed around 1,140 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli figures, reports AFP.

Army spokesman Daniel Hagari said that during fighting in the Shejaiya district of Gaza City, troops "mistakenly identified three Israeli hostages as a threat and as a result, fired toward them and the hostages were killed".

An army official said the hostages were all "without shirts" and had "a stick with a white cloth on it", but a soldier felt threatened and opened fire.

"Two are killed immediately, one is injured and runs back into the building," the official said, adding that the soldiers heard "a cry for help... in Hebrew".

Despite a ceasefire order, "there's another burst of fire towards the third figure and he also dies."

The official called it a "tragic" event and "very hard day", but said the troops had faced "intense combat in the area".

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described their deaths as an "unbearable tragedy".

In November, a one-week truce saw more than 100 hostages freed in exchange for Palestinians held in Israeli

jails, but fighting has since resumed.

The hostages' deaths have heightened already fierce scrutiny of how Israel is conducting its ground and air assault in Gaza.

News platform Axios said the director of Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, David Barnea, was due to meet this



Israel bombards northern, southern Gaza

20 Palestinians killed in Khan Younis

3 dozens killed in Jabalia refugee camp in 3 hours

weekend in an unspecified location in Europe with Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, who helped negotiate the earlier truce.

Meanwhile in Gaza, fierce fighting continued.

Israeli forces bombarded targets across Gaza including a YMCA building, with dozens of Palestinians reported killed or wounded.

In Khan Younis in the south, Palestinian health officials said the Nasser

Hospital had received 20 Palestinians killed in air strikes overnight, in addition to dozens of wounded, including women and children.

Palestinian health officials also said Israeli strikes on Gaza City in the north had hit the YMCA headquarters, which is sheltering hundreds of displaced people and reported several dead and wounded.

The official WAFA news agency said at least three dozen people had been killed in strikes on three houses in the Jabalia refugee camp, which health officials were unable to confirm. Gaza's health ministry has said Israel's ground offensive and the targeting of medical facilities have made it hard to gather information about casualties in northern Gaza, reports Reuters.

Rescue workers believed some casualties remained buried under the rubble in some of those areas.

Gaza residents also reported intense overnight fighting and bombardment in Shejaiya, Sheikh Radwan, Zeitoun, Tuffah and Beit Hanoun in the north, and in the centre, east and north of Khan Younis.

A funeral was held in Gaza for Samer Abu Daqqa, a journalist with TV network Al Jazeera killed the previous day by an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis that also wounded his colleague, Wael al-Dahdouh.

"He died hungry, they died with nothing to eat, with hunger. Oh my darling," said his grieving mother, Umm Maher.

More than 60 journalists and media staff have died since the war began, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Kuwait emir Sheikh Nawaf passes away

REUTERS, Kuwait

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah died yesterday, aged 86, according to the royal court, just over three years after assuming power in the US-allied Gulf oil producer.

The cause of his death was not immediately disclosed. The emir was admitted to hospital late last month due to what the state news agency described at the time as an emergency health problem but said that he was in a stable condition.

Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Sabah, 83, who has been Kuwait's de facto ruler since 2021, when the frail emir handed over most his duties, was named as Sheikh Nawaf's successor.

Kuwait announced 40 days of mourning and a three-day closure of official departments. World leaders paid tribute to Sheikh Nawaf and offered their condolences to his successor, Sheikh Meshal, the Al Sabah family and the people of Kuwait.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said in a statement on social media platform X that he was saddened to hear of the passing of Sheikh Nawaf, who he described as a great friend of the United Kingdom that would be remembered fondly.

Emirati President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed wrote on X that Sheikh Nawaf had been a wise leader who played a major role in strengthening Kuwait-UAE relations.

Sheikh Nawaf became emir in September 2020 following the death of his

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Bangladesh Congress threatens to pull out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Congress has threatened to withdraw all its 121 candidates from the electoral race alleging that the ruling Awami League wants to extend its stay in power by holding an election through sharing seats.

Speaking at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity, party Chairman Kazi Rezaul Hossen yesterday said they do not want to be used as the ladder for any party's route to power.

Today is the last day for withdrawal of candidature.

"If we run, they would use it to give legitimacy to the polls. We don't have any alternatives to withdrawing.

"Seeing the seats being shared [between political parties], we fear that the January 7 polls will not be free and fair," Rezaul said.

He alleged that leaders and activists of the ruling party were indiscriminately violating the electoral code of conduct showing blatant disregard for law.

He said a total of 140 aspirants from Bangladesh Congress submitted nomination papers and 121 of them were declared valid by the returning officers after scrutiny.

"Seeing the seats being shared, we fear that the January 7 polls will not be free and fair."

Kazi Rezaul Hossen
Chairman of Bangladesh Congress



Mourners carry the body of Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqa, who was killed during Israeli bombardment, during his funeral in Khan Yunis on the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Adani acquires major stake in Indian news agency IANS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian billionaire Gautam Adani's group has acquired a majority stake in private news agency IANS India Private Limited for an undisclosed sum as the group expanded its presence in the media space.

Adani Enterprises said in a filing with the regulator that its subsidiary "AMG Media Networks Ltd (AMNL) has acquired a 50.5 percent stake constituting equity shares of IANS India Pvt Ltd". The company did not disclose the acquisition price.

In the filing, it said, "AMNL has also signed a shareholders' agreement with IANS and Sandeep Bamzai, a shareholder of IANS, to record their inter-se rights with respect to IANS."

IANS had a revenue of Rs 11.86 crore in the fiscal year 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023).

"All operational and management control of IANS will be with AMNL and AMNL will have the right to appoint all directors of IANS," the filing said adding, "pursuant to the acquisition as set out above, IANS is now a subsidiary of AMNL."

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