



Dengue toll hits 418, third-highest since 2000

HELEMUL ALAM

Three more dengue-related deaths were reported yesterday, bringing this year's death toll to 418, the third-highest annual toll since Bangladesh recorded its first outbreak in 2000.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the highest number of dengue deaths was 1,705 in 2023, followed by 575 in 2024, 413 in 2025, 281 in 2022 and 179 in 2019.

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A recent death review of 119 dengue patients by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, led by its director Quazi Ahmed Zaki, found that more than one-third died within 24 hours of hospital admission.

The review identified dengue shock syndrome as the leading cause of death (62.5 percent), followed by expanded dengue syndrome (31.2 percent), dengue with bleeding (16.1 percent) and other causes (12.5 percent). Many patients also faced diagnostic delays of at least three days.

Zaki said hospital-based death review committees examine each case and submit their findings to the DGHS's Disease Control unit. The reviews assess causes of death, treatment quality, diagnostic delays, patients' conditions before admission and the use of contraindicated medicines to identify gaps in patient management.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1



Residents comfort each other amid the rubble of a house destroyed in an Israeli strike at the Bureij refugee camp in the Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Food preservation tech to cut post-harvest losses

Tk 115cr irradiation centre in Gazipur launches today

SUKANTA HALDER

Farmers may soon be able to reduce post-harvest losses and extend the shelf life of agricultural produce through a radiation-based food preservation centre set up at the Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) Regional Research Station in Gazipur.

25-30% of farm produce lost annually | Post-harvest losses cost Tk 20,000cr a year | Centre can process 85,000 tonnes annually

Agriculture Minister Mohammed Aminur Rashid is expected to inaugurate the Tk 115 crore gamma irradiation centre today.

Funded by the Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh, the facility was commissioned in September 2026.

BINA officials said the technology could extend the shelf life of agricultural produce by eliminating insects, parasites, pathogens and harmful microorganisms responsible for post-harvest damage.

According to a BINA document, the centre can process 8-10 tonnes of produce an hour and up to 85,000 tonnes annually, operating in three shifts a day.

Officials said 25-30 percent of the country's agricultural produce is lost after harvest every year, costing around Tk 20,000 crore.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 1

Jamaat eyes advisory council beyond party ranks

MAMUNUR RASHID

Jamaat-e-Islami is planning to form an advisory council comprising experts and intellectuals from outside the party to help shape its policies and decisions.

Party leaders have agreed in principle to the proposal, but the council's structure, size, membership criteria and responsibilities have yet to be finalised.

Abdul Halim, assistant secretary general of Jamaat, said the proposal would be placed before the party's next Majlish-e-Shura meeting after further review.

If approved, the party will amend its constitution to establish the council, which may include experts in economics, law, education, politics, religion and natural resources, as well as writers, academics and literary figures.

"The idea of forming an advisory council has received unanimous support. However, the practical and related aspects of the proposal are yet to be finalised. It will be placed before the next Majlish-e-Shura meeting again," Abdul Halim told The Daily Star.

He said the proposal was first raised at a Central Executive Council meeting on June 26. The party's annual Shura meeting may be held in late November or early December.

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

Houthi drone downed in Makkah region

Says Saudi coalition; Iran-backed group denies claim

AGENCIES

- Houthi missiles fired towards Riyadh downed
- Tanker in Hormuz hit by boat-borne explosives
- Mediators return to Tehran to push for US-Iran deal

The Saudi-led coalition said yesterday it intercepted and destroyed a drone fired by Yemen's Houthis in the Makkah region, with the group later denying it targeted Islam's holiest city.

"A drone launched by the terrorist Houthi militia has been intercepted and destroyed in the Makkah region," coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki wrote in a post on X. Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree called the Saudi statement "a massive and egregious fabrication".

Saudi Arabia has reported Houthi missiles fired in the regions of Makkah several times, with the group denying it fired towards the holy city.

On Thursday night, the coalition downed two ballistic missiles launched by the Iran-backed group towards Riyadh, soon after AFP correspondents heard explosions in the capital.

Meanwhile, a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz was hit by a small boat with two explosive devices attached to its hull, causing blasts that

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6

ISRAELI ELECTIONS

Stage set for tough coalition dialogue

Netanyahu's bloc wins 53 seats, opposition 48 and Arab parties 19

AFP, *Jerusalem*

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's camp finished ahead of the opposition but remained well short of a majority, final results from Israel's general election showed yesterday, setting the stage for tough coalition talks or potentially another vote.

Netanyahu's coalition of right-wing and far-right parties won 53 of the Knesset's 120 seats, with his Likud party remaining the largest faction with 27 seats. The opposition bloc, led by centrist Gadi Eisenkot, secured 48 seats.

The results from the Central Elections Committee also cemented the emergence as potential kingmakers of the Arab party groupings Raam and the Joint List, with the two winning a combined 19 seats.

The fragmented outcome sets the stage for difficult negotiations to form a government that could last weeks, with no single bloc able to reach the 61-seat threshold needed and the prospect of another election remaining if talks fail.

The final tally came after Netanyahu's

SEE PAGE 9 COL 6



A man carrying a child browses makeshift fruit stalls set up between railway tracks in the capital's Khilkhet area yesterday. Vendors briefly clear the tracks as trains approach and return moments later to resume business -- a practice that endangers public safety and train operations. PHOTO: MEHEDI HASAN

IN BRIEF

Measles toll rises to 1,251 as 2 more die

UNB, *Dhaka*

Two patients died with measles-like symptoms in 24 hours, till 8:00am yesterday, bringing the country's combined tally of confirmed and suspected measles-related deaths to 1,251 this year.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has classified all latest fatalities as suspected measles deaths.

With these, the total number of suspected measles deaths has reached 1,146 while confirmed deaths from measles remain at 105.

A total of 1,316 new suspected measles cases were reported during the 24-hour period, bringing the cumulative number of suspected cases nationwide to 227,673.

Meanwhile, 75 new confirmed measles cases were recorded, bringing the total number of laboratory-confirmed infections to 23,770.

6 killed, 2 hurt in lightning strike in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

At least six people were killed and two others critically injured in a lightning strike at Sonapatil Beel in Malonchi union of Pabna Sadar upazila yesterday evening.

The victims were fishing in the beel when lightning struck, killing six on the spot and critically injuring two others, according to police and locals.

Identities of all the victims could not be confirmed immediately.

Officer-in-Charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station Tarikul Islam confirmed the incident, saying police had visited the spot.

The victims were residents of wards 2 and 6 of Malonchi union, he said.

Three of the bodies have been handed over to their families, the OC added.