



One dead after torrential rain causes major floods in Attica

An unprecedented rainstorm caused widespread flooding on Friday and led to the death of a 28-year-old female motorist.

The woman was found slumped over the steering wheel of her car which had stalled on a flooded road on the border of Halandri and Maroussi. She was transferred to hospital where doctors confirmed her death, apparently from a heart attack.

The rainfall, which started in the early hours of the morning, flooded several roads with the areas of Aegaleo, Nikaia, Haidari and Peristeri in the western suburbs among the worst hit. A derelict building in the rundown central district of Aghios Panteleimonas collapsed, apparently due to the heavy rain, but there were no injuries. The fire service received more than 400 calls to pump out flooded basements or rescue stranded vehicles.

The rivers of Ilissos and Pivrodafni both broke their banks

with witnesses reporting seeing parked cars being swept away in the Pikrodafni River.

Several roads were closed off including Pireos Street due to heavy flooding at the Hamosternas junction, NATO Avenue near Aspropyrgos, Dimokratias Street and coastal Poseidonos Avenue near the junction with Syggrou Avenue. The Athens-Corinth national highway was flooded at the Skaramanga junction and parts of Piraeus, Drapetsona and Kalamaki were also badly affected with several reports of people trapped in their cars. The flooding caused problems with the operation of the Athens tram and led to many buses being taken off the roads. There were some disruptions with ferry travel.

Flooding at electricity substations in Terpsithea and Korydallos caused power cuts early in the morning but power had been widely restored shortly after 10 a.m.

Smoking ban checks to restart

The Health Ministry has announced the return of stricter checks regarding the enforcement of a smoking ban in public places. According to the ministry's general secretary, Christina Papanikolaou, a new circular calls for the intensification of checks at schools, hospitals, restaurants, bars and nightclubs by inspectors in charge of the implementation of the law initially introduced in 2010. The new wave of inspections is expected to meet with opposition from entrepreneurs who argue that the smoking ban will affect business amid the ongoing financial crisis. In November 2012, the Council of State ruled that the ban was in keeping with Greek law and the Constitution, after 150 entrepreneurs and the Panhellenic Federation of Restaurants and Related Professions filed an appeal against it.

Venizelos calls for police to break Golden Dawn links

PASOK leader Evangelos Venizelos on Friday called for the police to be purged of all links with neo-Nazi Golden Dawn. Critics have pointed to strong links between the far-right party and some officers in the force and Venizelos said that the police must improve their "internal monitoring" to ensure that Golden Dawn does not gain undue influence in the force.

Speaking at an event organized by the Andreas Papandreou Foundation (ISTAME) in Athens, Venizelos also called for civil society and the justice system to become more active in opposing Golden Dawn's actions. The PASOK leader also said it was time for the Church of Greece to take a clear stance over Golden Dawn, repeating his belief that the party is "unconstitutional" and should be isolated. Golden Dawn said Venizelos's attack on the party was designed to attract "the praise of international usurers."

Bid to attract undeclared cash abroad

Greece is planning to hold talks with representatives from the troika, who will be in Athens on Monday for the latest review of the country's fiscal adjustments program, on the idea of offering incentives to Greeks to bring their undeclared money back from abroad.

The government wants to create a scheme whereby Greeks with deposits abroad pay a relatively small fine to bring funds back as long as it is for investment purposes. The government wants to ensure such an initiative is not perceived to be a form of amnesty for tax evaders, so apart from linking the incentive to investment in the Greek economy, it also plans to announce it at the same time as the creation of Greece's first assets register, which will be used as a tool to clamp down on tax dodgers.

However, it is not clear if the troika will accept such a proposal. In November, the government had proposed that Greeks seeking to repatriate undeclared earnings pay a fine amounting to 8 percent of the total to avoid any further legal action or penalties. The troika rejected the suggestion.

EU Task Force officials had suggested at the time that such a measure could only be accepted if Greece's tax inspection system was able to pursue all those with undeclared assets who did not take up the amnesty offer.



Thousands of teenagers flooded a park in central Athens on Saturday to take part in the first Greek version of the Harlem Shake, the latest viral video to hit the Internet.

The new dance craze appeared to have started with a posting by a vlogger and spread quickly, with more than 12,000 Harlem Shake videos posted and watched up to 44m times in the first two weeks of February, according to YouTube.

Local teenagers responded enthusiastically to the call put out on social media to create a massive Harlem Shake video in Athens and came armed with costumes, funny props and even smoke flares.

Young Greek comedian Jeremy who organized the event said that the aim was to create the Harlem Shake video with the most participants.

«We wanted it to be the biggest one yet, so we chose a very central location. We wanted it to have the Acropolis in the background, but unfortunately it wasn't possible, but I think we managed to gather a lot of people,» said the 22-year-old Jeremy, who directed his fellow online comedian, Mikeius, in the video.

About 5000 people took part in the video which will be uploaded on Jeremy's YouTube channel, according to organizers.