Death toll in Thailand flooding jumps to 25

AFP, Bangkok

Thousands of people have been displaced by torrential floodwaters that slammed into southern Thailand, where the death toll has risen to 25. officials said yesterday.

Flooding since November 22 has affected more than 660,000 homes in the kingdom's south, the country's disaster agency said on its Facebook

Suwas Bin-Uma, a chicken farm owner in Songkhla province, told state broadcaster Thai PBS that the floods had wiped out his entire flock of more than 10,000 chickens.

"I've lost at least three million baht (\$87,000)," he said.

More than 22,000 people have been displaced from their homes due to flooding in Pattani, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Yala provinces, the

department said on Monday.

up sandbags in front of their homes on Monday in an attempt to block the swelling floodwater.

People were receiving one meal a day

Service seekers paid Tk 1.46 lakh crore

The organisation made nine specific recommendations, including bringing corrupt people to book, digitalisation of all services, updated code of conduct for each service providing agency.

Director Executive Iftekharuzzaman said the tools available to combat corruption are not being utilised.

The commitment, promises about zero tolerance against corruption remain only on paper ...," he said, adding that it seems corruption is getting some sort of acceptance among the people.

Iftekharuzzaman stressed the need for holding the corrupt accountable to effectively curb corruption and hoped that the interim government would set up an example paving the way for better practices in future.

The TIB has been publishing this report since 1997. Yesterday, it published the 10th one.

The report covered 17 service sectors, mostly government services, "riddled with petty corruption". It excluded areas known for large-scale corruption, like procurement, supply chain, and mega projects.

The survey revealed that 70.9 percent of surveyed households has experienced corruption in some form while availing services. The figure is the same as the survey of 2021.

The passport service (86 percent respondents) was identified as the most corrupt sector, followed by BRTA (85.2 percent), law enforcement agencies (74.5 percent), judicial services (62.3 percent), and land services (51 percent).

Overall, 50.8 percent surveyed households reported paying bribes or being forced to pay extra for services. Between May 2023 and April 2024,

service seekers paid around Tk 10,902 crore, which is 1.4 percent of the revised

national budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year and 0.2 percent of GDP, it says.

bribe on an average, it said.

average paid Tk 30,972 in bribes or in unauthorised payments, the highest in any sector. Second highest was land services with an average payment of Tk 11,776 per household; followed by banking services with an average of Tk 6,681 per household; and BRTA services with an average of Tk 6,654 per household

According to the 2021 survey, the most corrupt-ridden service provider was law enforcement agencies followed by Department of Immigration and Passports, and the BRTA. The previous survey said 40.1 percent of surveyed households had to pay bribe and the total amount of bribe money was Tk 10,830 crore.

The latest survey said 77.2 percent respondents provided bribe because "services cannot be obtained without paying a bribe," highlighting a concerning institutionalisation of

Around 60 percent respondents said they do not know how to lodge complaints about corruption. Only 0.6 percent victims filed complaints with the Anti-Corruption Commission.

complaints, 45 percent respondents said they did not feel it was necessary since the system was corrupt while 29.7 said they did not know how to lodge

At least 47.7 percent respondents cited impunity is the reason behind the

Footage on social media showed residents in Songkhla province stacking

The head of a village in Yala province, Abdullah Abu, told local media that flooding in his area had reached up to seven metres (23 feet).

Thai government's public relations from a rescue team, he told Channel 7.

rampant corruption while 33.8 blamed

recommended punishing the culprits

for curbing corruption while 22.1

percent and 21 percent spoke for

intensifying monitoring and launching

that corruption has been a common

phenomenon particularly in receiving

services from judiciary and the law

enforcement agencies, which impedes

the poor people to access justice," read

comparatively higher on low-income

below Tk 24,000 spend 0.93 percent of

their annual income on bribes, whereas

for households with a monthly income

exceeding Tk 85,000, this rate drops to

corruption and bribery experienced by

women, religious minorities, indigenous

people, and individuals with disabilities

create an additional burden on their

limited socioeconomic capabilities.

exacerbating their marginalisation.
Asked why law enforcement

went down notches in the survey,

Iftekharuzzaman said police are now

increasing getting involved in high-

level corruption, and that they are not

he said the amount of bribe paid to

avail judicial services was the highest

because people need to seek services

fellow Mohammad Nure Alam, and

research associate Abdul Hannan

Sakidar presented the outcome of the

Responding to another query,

Iftekharuzzaman, TIB research

The survey also found that

The report said impact of bribes

"Households with a monthly income

payments is

the executive summary of the report.

"The survey findings indicate

About 54.5 percent respondents

lack of social awareness.

a social movement.

and unauthorised

0.21 percent," it reads.

confined to the bribery.

several times.

households.

Each household paid Tk 5,680 in

For judicial services, households on

People faced other forms of difficulties too, including delays (46.5 percent respondents), having to go through brokers (39.4 percent), harassment (18.1 percent), and negligence of duties (9.8 percent).

bribery.

When asked why they did not file complaints.

"You have already turned the impossible into possible and changed the country," he said, laying emphasis on the immense trust the nation places in them.

Fulfill people's aspirations

The chief adviser reminded them that their victories must fuel the hopes of the people and encourage them to stay alert and committed to progress.

"You must fulfill the people's aspirations. At least you should move forward in that direction. You have achieved a victory, and another one will come."

Prof Yunus made the remarks during a dialogue with a delegation of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement. The meeting was held at the state guesthouse Jamuna at

"You [students] are the guardians of the country... Don't forget this role. Don't forget vour own role. Many are here and many are not. But those who are not here are also the guardians of the state," Prof Yunus told students,

During the meeting, the students asked the chief adviser to take steps to check prices of essentials, confer state honour upon the martyrs in the movement, give top priority to proper treatment to the injured, and ensure punishment of those involved in the July massacre.

The students expressed concern over the propaganda being spread against the government in the media and social media and suggested establishing an anti-propaganda cell.

Welcoming the students' suggestions regarding the price control of essentials, Prof Yunus said a few people controlling the prices will not be tolerated.

He said the government is trying to keep the prices of commodities stable and the highest efforts must be made to keep the prices steady during Ramadan.

After the meeting, Hasnat Abdullah, a convener of the organisation, said Bangladesh will not compromise even an inch on the question of sovereignty and territorial integrity with India.

"Don't see this government through the lens of the Awami League. Instead, build a relationship of fairness with it...

Hasnat accused the AL of using the minority card to perpetuate a narrative that the interests of the Hindu community would only be safeguarded under its rule.

We want to send a clear message: the Awami League government's oppression, persecution, and looting of minority property are unparalleled in history," he said. He said, "If you [India] think only the

Awami League can protect minority rights, you are entirely mistaken."

Hasnat also criticised what he

termed the "Indian mindset" held by some individuals within Bangladesh.

"Many of our Hindu brothers, while physically present in Bangladesh, hold an Indian mindset. Let me be clear: when it comes to sovereignty and territorial integrity, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians will fight together."

He alleged that India has relied on the AL to maintain unfair relationships with Bangladesh over the past 16 years. "If you believe these unjust ties can continue, you are wrong."

"India has always viewed Bangladesh through the Awami League's perspective. The relationship has not been one between the people of the two countries or even between two states, but rather between India and the Awami League.'

Hasnat highlighted the importance of people-to-people and state-to-state relationships between Bangladesh and

"We urge the chief adviser to disclose all secret agreements made with the Awami League and the Indian government, ensure justice for border killings, including Felani's case, and guarantee Bangladesh's fair share of

"Our trade relations with India must be based on fairness and dignity," he

Summit, Petrobangla disputing \$22m bill

"disputed invoices" and asked its relevant department to work out if the incident falls under adverse weather conditions (AWC), according to Summit.

the contract with Petrobangla, the incident can be classified as an AWC, so the stateowned enterprise is required to pay the full fee due to such kinds of force majeure, Summit said.

In a written reply to The Daily Star, Summit said it is standard industry practice for fees to remain payable by the customer (Petrobangla) during certain force majeure events.

The terminal use agreement (TUA) between Summit and Petrobangla also stipulates the same.

Section 24.5 of the TUA states that fees remain payable during a force majeure affecting the customer, a political force majeure event, during any period where the terminal's performance is adversely affected by AWC and during a force majeure event affecting the terminal, Summit said.

"Therefore. Summit is of the view that Petrobangla is under an obligation to pay against the monthly invoices raised during the force majeure period as per the TUA," they

Petrobangla chairman Zanendra Nath Sarker did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

Md Rafiqul Islam, the managing director of Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Limited, the company under Petrobangla involved with the LNG import, refused to comment on this as it is a legal issue.

"It will be solved under legal proceedings as per the agreements," he said.

Meanwhile, the IEEFA has called into question the financial case for having FSRUs in a country like Bangladesh.

None of Asia's largest LNG importers -- including mainland China, Japan, South Korea, India, Taiwan and Thailand -- have FSRUs. the note said, adding that the world's largest LNG importer China stopped using them in 2016 due to higher

In Japan, the world's second-largest buyer, harsh oceanic conditions limit their potential.

Taiwan and India are still pursuing FSRU projects despite challenging metocean conditions, while Thailand has shelved three FSRU projects, according to data from Global Energy Monitor.

The high operating costs of floating terminals can become more expensive than onshore configurations over time and are often unable to operate during periods of intense weather, the IEEFA said. "These risks are especially crucial

for developing countries in South

and Southeast Asia that are highly exposed to climate change, as stronger and more harmful weather events increasingly threaten the reliability of offshore projects.' Though the FSRUs are particularly

attractive for emerging markets due to faster lead times and lower capital costs, those face higher operating costs than onshore facilities.

For example, the charter rates for FSRU vessels typically range from \$29-\$44 million a year, and a recently terminated FSRU project in Bangladesh came with an annual fee of \$110 million.

Onshore terminals can be cheaper than FSRUs after six to seven years of operation, the IEEFA said citing Wartsila, a maritime energy technology group.

Dhaka summons Indian envoy Agartala is the result of Indian media violence. "Those were mainly personal

FROM PAGE 1

During the meeting, Verma said the authorities in India has beefed up security for the Bangladesh missions in New Delhi, Kolkata and Agartala, according to sources.

Speaking to journalists after the nearly a half an hour meeting, the Indian envoy said the wide-ranging and multifaceted Indo-Bangla relationship cannot be stuck on one

He also said India wants to build a constant, stable, and constructive relationship with Bangladesh.

"We are ready to engage with Bangladesh's interim government and are committed to working together to achieve our shared aspirations in peace, security, and development."

Verma said India and Bangladesh have many things to collaborate on and there have been many positive developments in different areas, including power supply, essential commodities, and trade.

INDIAN MEDIA BLAMED FOR ATTACK

Speaking to journalists yesterday, CA's Press Secretary Shafiqul said the attack on the Bangladesh mission in

spreading misinformation on the or political in nature." minority issues in Bangladesh.

showing that something dangerous is happening in Bangladesh. I will put the blame on the Indian media for

Muhammad Yunus, during his campaign was being carried out press secretary said. on alleged minority repression in Bangladesh, and requested him to send Indian journalists to Bangladesh so that they can see the ground realities.

"They can investigate into what is happening – if the violence is there. I also requested the Indian media to visit Bangladesh," Yunus had said.

Shafiqul said unfortunately, the Indian media are citing reports of the Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council (HBCUC) and other sources of their liking.

He said a Netra News investigation showed a HBCUC report contained distorted information. The report showed nine people were killed in attacks on minorities, but actually not every death was related to communal

The report of the HBCUC was "cited

"The misinformation campaign is by the media 11 million times", and unfortunately, the HBCUC did not issue a single statement on the Netra News report nor did it revisit its own report.

"We also called upon the global said Chief Adviser Prof human rights bodies to come and see. We are not stopping anyone from conversation with Indian Prime coming here. We have openness. We Minister Narendra Modi, said a are transparent in our activities," the However, those blaming the

> pretending to listen to the Bangladesh government, Shafiqul said. The Indian media is spreading misinformation without verification, and as a result, a section of Indian

> Bangladesh government of not

open to accepting anything are only

people are inciting violence, he said. The press secretary said the citizen groups, political parties, and the civil society should be vocal about it because the Indian media outlets are "trying to put the Bangladesh

government on trial". He said Bangladesh wants good relations with India, which is a big neighbour, but that should be based on fairness and equity.

Kurigram's Rikta makes it

he Rikta Akter Banu Learning Disability School serves around 300 students with diverse intellectual and physical disabilities.

Initially focused on supporting children with autism and learning disabilities, the school has expanded to accommodate a broader range of needs, fostering inclusion and reshaping societal attitudes towards the disabled in the region. Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday,

Rikta said, "I never thought my name would be on the list of BBC's 100 influential women of the world. I was surprised and happy to see it. It feels like a dream. "I just do my work. I never expected

results. BBC has given me the result of my work and I'm proud of it. I think if each of us just keep doing our own work, the results will definitely come." She said it was a dream of hers to

protect children with special needs

from society's neglect and contempt. "I took the responsibility of providing education for these children and make them into valuable citizens of the country. I'm still working to fulfil my dream. I have children and will continue to do so till the st day of my me.

Finances, however, continue to be a challenge for Rikta.

"Earlier, we used to be able to provide rice meals to the children. But now we can only provide biscuits and bananas.... We're bearing the costs ourselves but these children need nutritious meals. If we get financial support, we will be able to help the children more.'

Rikta also dreams of turning her school into a residential institution. "We have 294 children enrolled in our school and 90-120 of them attend every day. If we can make it into a residential school, all the children with disabilities can get proper education."

The BBC 100 Women initiative celebrates the resilience of women pushing for change in a rapidly evolving

This year's list also emphasised the impact of the climate emergency, spotlighting pioneers helping their

communities confront its challenges. In 2023, burn survivor and activist Jannatul Ferdous of Bangladesh was included in the list, and the year before that, Sanjida Islam Choya was in the list

an edge to the wicket-keeper.

FROM PAGE 12

Yoon's stunning announcement South Korea's first declaration of martial law in more than 40 years came as his party and the opposition

Korea from the threats posed by North Korea's communist forces and to eliminate anti-state elements people's plundering and happiness, I hereby declare emergency martial law," Yoon said in

the North's threats, but the South remains technically at war with nuclear-armed Pyongyang.

With no regard for the livelihoods of the people, the opposition party has paralysed governance solely for the sake of impeachments, special investigations, and shielding their

become a haven for criminals, a den of legislative dictatorship that seeks to paralyse the judicial and administrative systems and overturn our liberal democratic order," Yoon

With martial law imposed, all military units in the South have been ordered to strengthen their emergency alert and readiness Yonhap news agency postures, reported.

Draft a new constitution

The committee suggested including the Proclamation of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971 and the Proclamation of the "Second Republic", inspired by the spirit of July-August uprising, in the preamble to the

constitution. It also proposed that the next two national elections be held under

caretaker governments. Reducing the prime minister's powers was also proposed. According to the proposals, the same person cannot serve as the head of the ruling party and the leader of the House at

No individual can serve as president or prime minister more than twice, and a bicameral legislature with a fourvear tenure should be established, the committee proposed.

Its Member Secretary Akhtar Hossain, while speaking to reporters, said they believe that the existing constitution has become "invalid" after the uprising that toppled the Hasinaled government.

"It seems that the constitution is a document of the Awami League. The country is yet to reach the desired goal of the mass uprising. We need a new constitution for that," he said, adding that they have proposed drafting a new constitution instead of amending the existing one.

It suggested that the constitution be amended through should referendums, not by a three-fourths vote in the legislature.

The constitution must recognise

every ethnic identity, and citizens of Bangladesh should be identified as "Bangladeshis"

The preamble to the constitution must recognise "popular sovereignty". No articles like 4(A) of the constitution should be included in the new one. The article mandates

displaying the portrait of Father of

the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman at all government,

semi-government, and autonomous institutions. Instead, the committee proposed that only the national emblem be displayed

at government, semi-government, and autonomous institutions. The wealth and properties of serving

prime minister will have to be placed under the authority of the central bank. organisation restricting the rigidity of article 70 and giving more power to parliamentary

committees. Regarding parliament, it proposed that it be bicameral, comprising an upper house named Jatiya Parishad and a lower house named Ain Sabha.

A law should be passed by both upper and lower houses. The Jatiya Parishad should be elected through the proportional representation system while Ain Sabha

Proportional representation

would be elected by voting.

an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds with the proportion of the total votes cast for Out of the 100 seats at the Jatiya

Parishad, at least 33 seats must be

for professionals and marginalised groups, including farmers, workers, students, lawyers, doctors, engineers, agriculturists, and journalists.

The opposition will be able to form a

shadow cabinet under the leadership of the opposition leader. Meanwhile, the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement also recommended drafting a new constitution instead of

amending the existing one.

A four-member team of the organisation presented its proposals during a discussion with the Constitutional Reform Commission. After the meeting in the afternoon, Arif Sohel, member secretary of

the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, told journalists that they had presented some proposals verbally. He added that they plan to submit the proposals in writing soon. Among their proposals decentralising the prime minister's

powers by granting some authority

to the president, creating a bicameral

parliament, and establishing a Supreme Judicial Council. Noted economist Prof Rehman Sobhan and political scientist Prof Rounaq Jahan yesterday also gave their opinions before the Constitutional eform Commission.

Brig Gen (retd) Mohammad Hasan Nasir, Lt Col (retd) Hasinur Rahman Bir Pratik, Lt Col (retd) Mustafizur Rahman, and retired Commander (BN) Nesar Ahmed Julias also submitted their written proposals on behalf of Justice for Comrades, a platform of retired defence officers.

dedicated myself to the welfare of these for her fight against child marriage.

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has also caused unease among them,

they added. Adv Nitai Prasad Ghosh said, "Many Hindu lawyers are hesitant to go to court for legal battles after what happened on

However, Nitai, who is also an accused

in the case filed by Alif's brother, said

he has not received any threats or intimidation. Visiting the court yesterday, this correspondent saw that police ramped up security at the court premises ahead

of the hearing. Additional police patrols

prevent any untoward situation. Ahead of the hearing, a group of lawyers staged a demonstration and brought out a procession at the court premises. However, the accused was not produced in court today.

Meanwhile, the Sammilita Sanatani Jagaran Jote alleged that lawyers were prevented from representing Chinomoy for his bail hearing. In a statement, the alliance condemned

the intimidation and threats faced by lawyers who had previously defended Chinomoy, calling it a blatant violation of the rule of law and human rights. They urged the Bangladesh government and

Hearing on Chinmoy's bail international organisations to intervene. On October 31, a BNP leader filed a case with Kotwali Police Station

accusing Chinmoy and 18 others of

disrespecting Bangladesh's national

flag in Chattogram's New Market area

during a rally of the Hindu community on October 25. Chinmoy was arrested by detectives from the Hazrat Shahialal International Airport area in Dhaka on November 25. On November 26, Chinmoy was

produced before a court in Chattogram,

but the court refused his bail prayer and

sent him to jail, sparking outrage among

were seen at various points of the area to his followers. The followers blocked the prison van for hours at the court building, demanding his release and forcing the law enforcers to charge batons and fire sound grenades to disperse them. This triggered a clash between police,

> Chinmoy followers, and lawyers. During the clash, lawyer Saiful Islam Alif was hacked to death by a group of protestors outside the court area.

> > Three cases have been filed, accusing

79 named and 1,400 unnamed individuals in connection with the clash. Besides that, Alif's father also filed a case against 31 people, while his brother registered another case accusing 115.

Taskin, Taijul strike the Windies still needed 221 runs to

win the match and clinch the two match series 2-0. For Bangladesh, Taijul drew first blood as he dismissed opener Mikyle Louis (six off 12 balls) early in the

fifth over. The right-handed batter tried to fend off a delivery on middle and leg but the ball hit the inner half of his bat and then popped up off his boot before ending up in the hands of Shahadat Hossain Dipu at short-leg.

With Brathwaite looking positive, it took the Tigers another 10 overs to get their second wicket. Pacer Taskin Ahmed delivered the good this time to dismiss Keacy Carty (14 off 43 balls). Taskin pitched it up and outside off to the right-handed batter who hung his bat out only to concede

South Korea's Yoon

bicker over the budget. 'To safeguard a liberal South

a live televised address to the nation. Yoon did not give details of

leader from justice," Yoon added. "Our National Assembly has

China, a key ally of North Korea.

urged its nationals in the South to stay calm and exercise caution.