



Ashish Damle

“Minimum funding for Rohingyas must be met”

In conversation with Ashish Damle, Country Director, Oxfam Bangladesh

The Daily Star (TDS): How do you evaluate the current global response to the Rohingya crisis?

Ashish Damle (AD): The Rohingya refugee issue is a protracted crisis, which has a 30-year history beginning with the establishment of the first camp. Right now, the crisis is under the shadow of the Russia-Ukraine war, high growth of inflation and post-Covid impact. Therefore, the kind of funding that was available in 2017 or 2018 has reduced due to lack of overall responses.

It is also evident that there is no long-term solution that is coming any time soon. It is very unrealistic to expect continuous full-fledged support from Bangladesh's government. At the same time, keeping these almost 1 million people without any support is also inhuman.

The issue is not only affecting any particular entity, but also everybody associated with it

(INGOs, Bangladesh and the affected community). Therefore, it is important that all stakeholders come together to find a collaborative solution.

The Rohingya refugee crisis got huge exposure in the international media and global platforms back in 2018-19, when it was a part of standard discussion. For example, the issue was raised by the United Nations General Assembly and World Economic Forum. But now, we observe that this particular crisis is receiving the least attention.

Although it is a large-scale humanitarian response, it has its own limitations, and it may not continue in the same fashion as it was in the past.

TDS: How is the gradual decrease in funding impacting the Rohingya humanitarian responses?

AD: When funding is restricted, the response needs to focus on top priorities such as food, shelter, clothing and health. For example, the