



A surface water plant at the Unchiprang Rohingya Refugee Camp in Teknaf.
PHOTO: RAHIM SAJJAD

Strides made in ensuring water supply, latrine services

Fifty-year-old Md Karim (pseudonym), who lives in the Unchiprang Rohingya Refugee Camp in Teknaf, collects water in some 15 jerry cans from a perennially crowded collection point on a daily basis.

"Yet, this water is very little considering our need," said Karim, who has a family of nine.

"For bathing and going to the toilet, I collect water from other sources that are a bit further away from the camp, but those dry up sometimes," he added.

To Karim, water scarcity is the biggest challenge in the camp as groundwater is not available.

He then informed that they are forced to bathe in turns.

"Men shower once every three to four days while it is more challenging for women as they get to bathe once a week," Karim said.

Like Karim, there are 22,000 Rohingyas living in the camp, where water scarcity has been severe ever since the refugee influx in 2017.

As groundwater is not available, the refugees' sufferings for water was so high that development agencies first ensured water supply in this particular camp.

So, Oxfam established a surface water plant in the camp in 2017, through which clean and safe water is regularly supplied to each of the refugees.

"When we analysed the situation, we found that water scarcity is the biggest gap. Moreover, the groundwater level was not feasible to extract water and so, we surveyed the area for surface water sources," Arif Al Sead, public health engineer of Oxfam, recently told The Daily Star.

"Initially, we started supplying water on a very