

TREATING SALINITY IN GROUNDWATER

DPHE now trying out nanofiltration in Bagerhat

75 devices to be installed in the district; each device costs a whopping Tk 20.5 lakh

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

Thousands of people in five upazilas of Bagerhat -- a coastal district where fresh drinking water is scarce due to high salinity in groundwater -- are once again getting their hopes up on a probable solution to their longstanding water crisis.

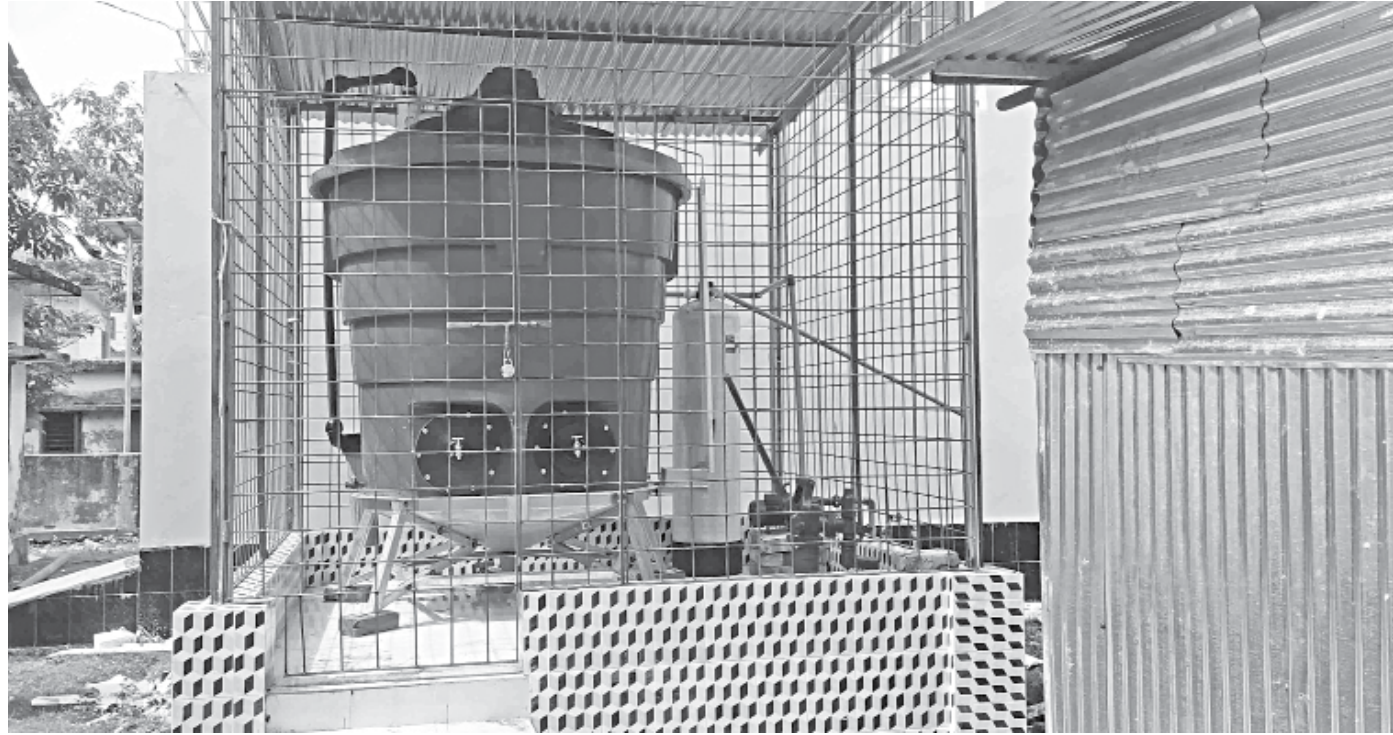
After failures in ensuring safe drinking water for the residents through the application of various methods -- including preserving surface water in conventional water ponds, incorporating sand filtration devices with the ponds and most recently, installation of rainwater harvesting equipment -- the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) this time has come up with nanofiltration technology to treat saline water in the area.

In Morrelganj upazila, Balbhadrapur village resident Shekhar Das said, "The ponds and the sand filters here and in surrounding areas have been out of order for a while. We have been buying a 20-litre water jar for Tk 35 to 40."

Seeing a sign of hope in the new devices, he said excitedly, "We have an acute shortage of drinking water. Installation of these nanofilters will solve our longstanding pure water crisis here."

Under an ambitious pilot project undertaken for Rangamati, Bagerhat and Faridpur, the DPHE, in Bagerhat alone, is installing 75 nanofiltration devices in Sharankhola, Mongla, Chitalmari, Kachua and Morrelganj upazilas where installation of deep tube well is not a viable option.

With an estimated cost of Tk 20.5 lakh, each nanofiltration device is supposed to treat 960 litres of fresh groundwater per hour in four steps, pumped in from a nearby water pond with an electric water pump.



A nanofiltration device awaiting formal inauguration in Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

According to DPHE, out of the total 75 nanofiltration devices currently being installed in Bagerhat, 18 are being installed in Sharankhola, 14 in Mongla, 9 in Chitalmari, 9 in Kachua and 25 in Morrelganj.

DPHE officials hope that all the devices will be open for public by August 30 this year.

Ripon Das, chairman of Banagram Union Parishad in Morrelganj upazila, said, "Work is underway to install two

nanofilters in Jaipur and Balabhadrapur villages in my union."

He hoped that the new devices will solve the longstanding freshwater crisis for residents in the area.

"Finding fresh drinking water is a severe problem in my area. With the nanofilter being installed here, the water problem in this area will be solved," hoped Selim Sikder, a member of Ward-2 in Badhal Union Parishad under Kachua Upazila.

FM Ismail Hossain, executive engineer of DPHE in Bagerhat, said the pilot project is being carried out in five out of nine upazilas in Bagerhat, some areas in Faridpur and Rangamati to treat groundwater with high salinity and arsenic contamination.

No chemical is used in the filtration process of nanofiltration technology and impure water is turned into safe drinking water through the use of different types of filters, he added.

Elderly couple dies from electrocution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A man and his wife died from electrocution in Kawkhali upazila of the district yesterday.

The deceased are Azahar Ali Khan, 75, and his wife Renu Begum, 60, of Kathaliya village in the upazila.

The elderly couple's two-year-old grandson Yeasin, who also sustained injury during the incident, is now undergoing treatment at hospital.

Yeasin's father Rezaul Karim said his mother first came in contact with a snapped live electric wire at their courtyard around 11:00am.

Seeing her, Azahar rushed there and tried to save his wife but he too got injured.

At that time, Yasin, who was playing there, also came in contact with his grandparents and sustain injuries.

Hearing screams, neighbors rescued them and took them to Kawkhali Upazila Health Complex where the doctors declared Azahar and Renu dead.

Yeasin was later sent to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for better treatment, Kawkhali Upazila Nirbahi Officer Khaleda Khatun Rekha said.

Missing youth found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Police recovered the body of a youth from Naobhangachar area in Jamalpur municipality yesterday, six days after he went missing on Thursday.

The deceased, Apu Miah, 22, a tractor driver, was son of Suruj Ali of the area.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Salemuazzaman quoted victim's family members as saying that Apu went out of his house on Thursday evening and remained missing since then.

The following day, Apu's father Suruj Ali filed a General Diary (GD) with the police station, he added.

Police detained victim's neighbor Al Amin, 24, son of Kalu Miah, from Tangail's Madhupur upazila on Tuesday, for his alleged involvement in connection with the incident, he said.

During primary interrogation, Al Amin confessed that he stabbed Apu to death and dumped the body near his house on Thursday night.



Doctors and health workers provide services for outdoor patients from inside a four-booth safety chamber at Kalihati Upazila Health Complex in Tangail, maintaining safety measures for all concerned against coronavirus infection.

'Risk-free' medical service from safety chamber

Kalihati UZ hospital makes the arrangement as safeguard against Covid-19

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A specially designed 'safety chamber' in Tangail's Kalihati Upazila Health Complex, set up for ensuring protection from coronavirus infection during treatment of general patients at the outdoor, has received appreciation from all concerned.

On May 5, following detection of the first Covid-19 patient in the upazila, who had received treatment for a common illness at the health complex a day earlier, the doctors and health workers associated with the patient were sent to quarantine and one of the health workers was later tested Covid-19 positive.

Consequently, the upazila administration decided to ensure highest safety of the doctors and health workers at the hospital so that health services for the general patients are not hampered.

Then the upazila health complex set up the four-booth air-conditioned safety chamber with Tk 5 lakh financial support from the upazila parishad and the new chamber started functioning on May 23.

Ticket providers, doctors and pharmacists involved in the services work from inside the chamber, Dr Saidur Rahman, upazila health and family planning officer in Kalihati, told The Daily Star.

"Here the ticket issued with the patient's information from the first chamber is given to the doctor at the chamber next to him. The doctor, wearing gloves, examines

the patient with stethoscope from inside the chamber, measures the temperature with digital thermal scanner, measures the level of oxygen in the patient's body and pulse through digital pulse oximeter.

The doctor then puts the prescription for the patient to the computer, which is printed in the pharmacy section. The pharmacist provides the printed prescription and medicine to the patient after confirmation of the token number of the patient, he said.

The whole process has been designed to ensure safety for doctors, health workers and service recipients from the risk of coronavirus infection, he added.

During a recent visit to the health complex, it was seen that the doctors were providing health care services to the patients, maintaining safety inside the chamber made of glass.

Expressing satisfaction with the arrangement, Saiful Islam, a patient at the outdoor, said, "The doctors, other staff, as well as patients earlier faced the risk of coronavirus infection here. After setting up of the safety chamber, they feel safe now."

Contacted, Kalihati Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shamim Ara Nipa, said, "The safer healthcare delivery process has been arranged to ensure protection for all concerned. Earlier the upazila administration arranged a special vehicle for the health complex, which moves to the people's doorsteps for collecting samples."

Patients Suffer: Ambulance drivers sued for murder on the run

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Patients face untold sufferings as all the three ambulance drivers of Pirojpur District Hospital and Pirojpur Mother and Child Welfare Centre (MCWC) in the town have gone into hiding after two of them were sued in separate murder cases.

They are Motaleb Sheikh and Kabir Hossain, drivers of Pirojpur District Hospital and Sumon Sheikh, the only ambulance driver of Pirojpur MCWC. Sumon is the son of Motaleb.

Police said on Sunday, Motaleb along with some men allegedly hacked his neighbour Enayet Mollah, 60, of Khanakuniary village in Pirojpur Sadar following an altercation over a piece of disputed land.

Critically injured Enayet was then rushed to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH). He died there early Tuesday.

Later, the deceased's son Al Amin filed a case with Sadar Police Station, accusing 11 named and three to four unnamed people. Motaleb is the main accused in the murder case.

After filing of the case, Motaleb and his son Sumon went into hiding. However, Sumon's name was not mentioned in the case.

They were raiding different areas to arrest the accused, said Nurul Islam Badal, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

On the other hand, another ambulance driver Kabir Hossain of Pirojpur District Hospital has gone into hiding since a murder case was filed with Sadar Police Station against him on June 25. The deceased was Tushar Sheikh, 14, a student of Class IX of Pirojpur Town High School.

On June 24, relatives took Tushar to Pirojpur District Hospital after breaking his right leg. After giving primary treatment, the on duty doctor at the hospital referred him to Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

But on the way to KMCH, ambulance driver Kabir took the victim to a house in Pirojpur town where a group of fake doctors, led by Sachin Roy, a pharmacist of Pirojpur District Hospital,



Patients at Pirojpur District Hospital suffer as the ambulance drivers sued for murder of two persons are on the run. Two ambulances are parked in the garage of the hospital. PHOTO: STAR

treated the patient. Later, the boy died there.

The following day, the deceased's father Shohag Sheikh filed a murder case with the police station, accusing five named and two to three unnamed people. Ambulance driver Kabir is the prime accused in the case.

Police later arrested two accused-- Ali Imam Antu and Ali Hasan Leon--in the murder case. The arrestees are the sons of late Abdus Salam Modhur, former councillor of Ward no 6 of Pirojpur municipality.

Patients coming to the hospitals in Pirojpur for receiving treatment have been facing untold sufferings since the ambulance drivers have gone

into hiding.

Pankaj Kumar Mistry from Nazirpur upazila said "I came to Pirojpur District Hospital to treat my pregnant wife on Tuesday morning but fell in trouble in the afternoon when we had to leave the hospital for home as there was no ambulance driver at the hospital."

Contacted, Dr Md Hasnat Yousuf Zaki, civil surgeon in Pirojpur, said he has informed the higher authorities about the matter.

However, an ambulance driver from an upazila health complex in Barguna district joined Pirojpur District Hospital yesterday, said the civil surgeon.



Road communication between Fultola and the upazila headquarter remains suspended since Friday morning after an under construction Bailey bridge on a diversion road collapsed at Kapnapahar in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Govt medicines seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Police in a drive seized huge quantity of government medicines from the house of a medicine shop owner in Wireless Colony area of the town on Tuesday.

Earlier on June 25, police detained Sarafat Ali, owner of Town Pharmacy in Puranbazar area, and recovered huge smuggled government medicines from his shop.

According to his confession, police raided his house on Tuesday and recovered more government medicines from there, Officer in Charge of Sadar Police Station Mahfuz Alam said.

Mentionable, on June 23, police arrested Abdur Razzak and his wife Nilufar Yesmin from Driverpara area of the town and recovered smuggled government medicines and medical equipment worth Tk 6 lakh from their possession.