



ATAUL'S GIFT OF SAFE DRINKING WATER

Low cost but high performance water treatment plant designed by ABM are being used in the UN Peacekeeping Missions

PHOTOS: COURTESY

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

On March 22, many organisations and leaders of Bangladesh widely celebrated Water Day. Ataul Karim, a Bangladeshi entrepreneur and owner of ABM Water Company, has conceptualised a way to face the challenge of the severe drinking water crisis in Bangladesh. He says, "At my locality in Sylhet, the drinking water has a high concentration of iron. At first, I didn't have the know-how, but, I started to explore the field of water resources. So, I studied the latest water treatment technologies such as reverse osmosis, but, struggled hard to establish my own factory and took the challenge to ensure safe drinking water for my countrymen."

Shahara Begum of Koyra village has a lot to say about this man's endeavour. Koyra is a remote coastal village under Khulna district. Due to frequent cyclones, most of the water sources turned contaminated. Shahara Begum says, "The only source of our drinking water was a tank beside the Mia Bari. He charged us twenty taka per five litres of his water from that tank. It was very difficult for me

to afford that price. Now, we have a machine to collect fresh water."

The machine is just desalination equipment installed by Ataul's ABM Water Company. After the devastation by cyclone Sidr and Aila, several small desalination systems were installed in the coastal areas by international donors. But, due to poor maintenance and complicated technology, most of those

systems were damaged and unusable. Ataul's crew simply trains a local technician to handle the machine. And from the nominal price of the water, they ensure the technician's salary, but, they don't take any profit.

Where desalination is not possible, Ataul and his team have introduced rain water harvesting to convert rainwater into fresh drinking water. By introducing

desalination treatment and rain water harvesting technology, Ataul has ensured safe drinking water in many remote villages of Bangladesh.

Moreover, Ataul has been awarded as the highest taxpayer in the youth category consecutively in 2016 and 2017 for his hardwork and commitment to his enterprise. He also received the Bristol Blue Award in 2014 for his professional contribution to protecting the environment. The first venture of Ataul's company was to install desalination equipment in some vessels of the Bangladesh Navy, by which, the sea faring sailors could convert saline sea water into fresh and safe drinking water. Ataul's company has recently installed the largest desalination water treatment plant of South Asia for the Chittagong Sea Port.

"I wanted to do something prolific for my country. Through my efforts, I have developed the manpower skill to handle the latest technology in water treatment systems. I have a dream to export our skills to other countries and earn huge amounts of foreign currency for Bangladesh," shares Ataul.



Ataul Karim



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Youth Opportunities

Full Scholarships for Women Deliver 2019 Conference in Canada

The conference will present new knowledge, promote world-class solutions, and engage a broad spectrum of voices. It will focus on several issues from health, nutrition, education, economic and political empowerment to human rights, good governance, and girls' and women's agency and equality.



Deadline: April 19, 2018 | Conference

Microsoft Young Bangla Internship 2018

Microsoft and Young Bangla is collaboratively giving internship opportunity to university students. The internship programme aims to provide students and ICT enthusiasts with short-term placements. As of now, 350 Young Bangla members, including 50 award winners, have received internships with Microsoft Bangladesh.

Deadline: Ongoing | Internship

Arabic Summer School at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco

The programme is crafted to develop students' proficiency and communication in Modern Standard Arabic. This integrative training is a gateway to the rich components of the Arab culture, within the framework of intercultural dialogue and communication.



Deadline: April 10, 2018 | Summer School

RECURRING LIFE

SAMAIRA HASAN

Let me introduce myself. I am Aqua, I am made out of oxygen and two hydrogen atoms, so you can probably guess what I am. I live in the ocean with my many, many siblings. Most of them have been separated from me. Water particles aren't very close together as we are always busy moving around and working. Although sometimes you occasionally bump into another molecule you know, the problem is, once you've bumped into them, you have to change direction and you'll most likely not see them again. You see, as I'm in the ocean, I don't really get to socialise with other molecules as we constantly get separated because of the hydrologic cycle. It's basically my whole life: starting off as a molecule in the ocean, minding my own matters, then, being collected by the clouds to just fall back into the ocean as rain! To you humans, this is also known as the water cycle. However, to me, it's my recurring life and it will never change.

Well, that's what I thought... One day, when I was in the ocean, I started to feel rather hot. When I get hotter I become faster and work a lot quicker than my usual rate. But, that wasn't it on this occasion. There were some other unusual liquid particles lingering around. I was quite intrigued. So, I shouted, "Who are you? Where do you come from?" I was heading towards the other direction, so, I had to say it loudly so they could hear me. But, before I could hear their reply, a strange sensation came over me. I started to

speed up and then, I suddenly felt like I was floating. It felt so peculiar yet so fun! I hadn't felt like this before. I had been so used to my life going around literally in circles (like the water cycle!) that I hadn't known what it felt like to have fun. Something unusual must have happened to cause this to happen. Then, I remembered those strange particles I saw. They looked an awful lot like those fertiliser chemicals that we were told to stay away from. Everything near it becomes very hot and has a butterfly effect on the ocean. When it becomes too hot, some of the molecules (like me) turn into gas and spread around the world contributing to climate change! It's a huge "heat butterfly effect" on the world!

It was then that I realised that, if I'm a gas, all I would be doing is floating around and making the heat spread. "ALL I DO IS FLOAT ABOUT?" This is a terrible predicament! Now that I am a gas, I will hardly ever come into contact with other particles. I will be so far apart from them that there won't be any point trying to shout. They will be too far to hear me! Hmm... I guess I should have been thankful for what I had in the first place! I concluded that, my old recurring life was not so bad after all, but now, I have a new recurring life! I just wish it would all end.

Yet maybe, I should be happy with what I have before complaining again. I wish nothing had ever changed.

Ms. Samaira Hasan is a student of Hockerill Anglo-European College, Bishops Stortford, UK



British Council Celebrates #PressforProgress

YOUTH DESK

On March 8, 2018, the British Council arranged daylong events to celebrate International Women's Day 2018, at their premises.

The occasion was packed with activities like the "Quizard", an online quiz competition, where the participants had to answer questions related to prominent women's right activists like Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain and Emmeline Pankhurst. A film screening session on women's issues was arranged too, where award-winning short films directed by children were showcased by the Children's Film Society Bangladesh.

After the lunch break, a workshop for adolescent girls and boys was arranged, where Samir Asran Rahman, the creator of Ms Shabash (a comic that was launched on International Women's Day in 2015 by

Dhaka's Mighty Punch Studios) navigated the young minds to generate story ideas that encourage a gender-equal society.

The Living Library session was conducted in the garden area in the afternoon, where women from all fields of life

were invited to hold conversations; aiming to challenge stereotypes and prejudices through dialogue, along with empowering other females.

Finally, a panel discussion was arranged in the British Council

Auditorium. Prominent women and human rights activists like Mahmuda Rahman Khan, USAID, Bangladesh; and Taslima Akhter, activist and photographer; took part in the session. While the panel shares their experiences as professionals and discuss on the status of women's education and employment, Taslima Yasmin, Assistant Professor of the Dhaka University Law Department, adds, "If the youth could unite and win a language and war in the past, then, the youth today can unite and win over the existing inequality in the society."

Keeping this year's International Women's Day campaign theme "#PressforProgress" in mind, the initiative by the British Council successfully created awareness on women's rights, as well as, honoured women's achievements. We now come a step closer towards creating a better Bangladesh.



PHOTO: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA