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Coast Guard commissions device which extracts drinking water from atmosphere

PUDUCHERRY: A device which can extract pure drinking water from atmosphere was commissioned here by the Coast Guard as part of the World Fisheries and Fishermen Day celebrations on Thursday.

Puducherry district collector S B Deepak Kumar inaugurated the facility at the fishing harbour in Thengaithittu.

N Somasundaram, commanding officer of the Indian Coast Guard station in Puducherry, said the coast guard would pay Rs 4,000 per month to Chennai-based Akashganga AME India Pvt Ltd which developed the device.

The equipment, Akash Ganga, yields roughly 160 litres per day after processing moisture content in the atmospheric air. It sucks atmospheric air with the help of a fan and condenses it to extract water from moisture. It has a 12 micron air filter to filter impurities and suspended particles in the air. Apart from the filter in the suction, the equipment has three more filtration processes to ensure that the water is free from bacteria and microbes.

"Akash Ganga is a perennial solution for water crisis. The

equipment, which has excellent filtration techniques, yields drinking water free of any microbes or bacteria. Contamination occurs only when water comes in contact with the earth. The equipment sucks atmospheric air, filters it at different levels and condenses it to extract water," Akashganga managing director T M Shyam Sunder told TOI.

Explaining the advantages of the technique, Sunder said the equipment does not leave any effluent. Moreover, it does not require any major source of water, and the high quantity of moisture in the air serves as the source of water. The equipment is eco-friendly as it consumes very limited ground water resource.

"It is an effort to address the over reliance on depleting ground water resources. There is no dearth of atmospheric air and humidity in any part of the world. Higher the humidity the equipment extracts more water. Even in places where the relative humidity is as less as 25%, the equipment extracts water from atmospheric air," he said.

The first unit was commissioned in the country at the Punjab Regiment Centre, Indian Army, in 2004. Akashganga AME India Pvt Ltd commissioned 16 units at the centre followed by four units at the Indian Coast Guard station in Chennai, 10 at Indian Council of Medical Research in Chennai and 12 at the Port Blair centre of the Pondicherry University. The firm has sold more than 1,000 units to individuals in several parts of the country, besides in foreign countries like Oman and Dubai.

The equipment, which costs Rs 1.6 lakh, will last for a minimum of seven to 10 years. It extracts water at destinations less than 150km to 200km from the coast.