

Coming soon? Drinking water from Pashan lake

PMC considering city company's membrane filtration plan to provide 50 lakh litres a day

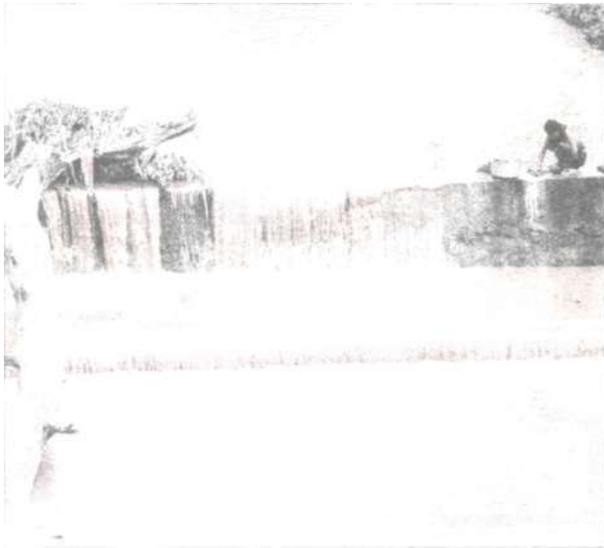
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A project to procure potable water from Pashan lake is under active consideration of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). Membrane Filters (India) Pvt Ltd, a Pune-based company working in the field of filtration systems, has approached the PMC with an offer to make the lake water potable by installing a membrane filtration system.

According to the firm, this system can be used to provide 50 lakh litres of purified water to about 50,000 households a day. When contacted, Municipal Commissioner Praveensinh Pardeshi said that the PMC is considering implementation of the project on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis.

Pashan lake used to supply drinking water to Governor's House during the 1940s and the residents of Pashan and nearby areas till about a decade back. The project, estimated to cost around Rs 8 crore, is based on technology developed by the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), one of the country's premier science and research institutes. It was eight months ago that Membrane Filters (India) chairman Subhash Devi approached the PMC to demonstrate that the unutilised water of Pashan lake, which is spread over 110 acres, can be made safe for drinking by purifying it



The lake used to be the source of potable water for residents of Pashan and nearby localities till about a decade ago

through membrane filters, a technology that has been acquired by Devi's company for commercial use on a royalty basis from NCL.

"I approached the PMC in October last year and the municipal commissioner showed interest in the project," said Devi. "Thereafter, we started analysing the raw and untreated water in the lake that was not only contaminated microbiologically, but was also mixed with sewage and industrial effluents," he added.

"We even installed a small pilot for three weeks. We treated the lake water to bring down the BOD (biological oxygen demand) and COD (chemical oxygen demand) level and, thereafter, treated it with pressure membrane filtration," Devi informed.

The treated water was then sent for tests to the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories, run by the Department of Science and Technology. The tests found that the untreated water, which originally had a very high degree of bacterial contamination, had no such problem after the treatment.

"Till about a decade back, Pashan lake used to provide water to the residents of Pashan and nearby localities. However, the water quality kept on deteriorating, as the quantity of sewage water and other effluents mixing in the water kept rising. In 1998, we discontinued providing drinking water from the lake," said PMC Development Engineer (Sewage Water) VGKulkarni.