

Water from ATMs in Bhubaneswar to be free now

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BHUBANESWAR: People living in the slums heaved a sigh of relief as the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday decided to provide water from the ATM free of cost. Ever since its introduction in December last year, people were paying 30 paise for a litre of water.

BMC sources said people will only have to get a smart (swipe) card for Rs 25 to fetch water from the ATM. The BMC had formed a committee to take decision on whether to provide water free of cost. The committee recommended it for free to maximize use of ATM.

One ATM can store minimum 500 litres and maximum 40,000 litre. The BMC so far has completed installation of 20 ATMs which runs on solar power. "Once swiped, the ATM screen will show options of quantity of water. The machine will pump out water based on the quantity of litres opted by the people. On a given day, maximum 20 litres of water can be fetched using one card," BMC sources said.

In view of the summer, purified water at the slum pockets (where water is scarcely available) will be given free with immediate effect. "All the corporators of the BMC have arrived at a consensus for it," said a spokesperson of BMC.

In the first phase, the BMC installed ATMs at Jharana Basti, Gandamunda, Jadupur, Dumduma, Pokhariput, Siripur, Ganganagar square, Bhimtangi, Sundarpada and Bhoi

Sahim, Barmunda. These pockets had reported jaundice last year. After ATMs were installed, no cases of jaundice from these areas were reported.

The BMC has signed MoU with a private firm Piramal Sarvajal to set up water ATMs. Bhubaneswar is the second city in the country to have this facility of drawing water after Delhi.