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KWA to pilot automated meter reading in city

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To enable real-time monitoring of usage

The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) will launch an automated meter reading (AMR) system on a pilot basis in the city within three months, with the objective of monitoring meter readings sitting in the utility's headquarters itself.

The project, to ride on the General Packet Radio System (GPRS) technology and a Geographic Information System (GIS) platform, will be for 125 selected consumers who use more than 500 kilo litres a month, all in the non-domestic category. This, according to the KWA officials, is one category where there is malpractice on a large scale, with many defaulting on payments, tampering with meters and literally stealing huge quantities of precious water.

The proposal, which was submitted by the Non-Revenue Water Management Unit (NRWM) of the utility to the KWA Board, was approved recently. The pilot project is expected to be launched within three months, and once the feasibility is confirmed, will be expanded to the rest of the category and slowly to domestic consumers as well.

The automated meter reading system will gradually replace the current method of manual reading of meters once in two months. The system was based on transmission of pulses generated via GPRS to the server to enable real-time monitoring, which according to K.S. Praveen, Assistant Executive Engineer, of the KWA's NRWM unit, would be helpful to consumers, who would not have to face the situation of an abnormal bill after two months since variations could be found out immediately. Leakages and manipulations too could be detected without delay. The 125 consumers identified for the project comprised mostly hotels and restaurants.

Testing of compatibility of the AMR system with the existing software of the KWA was progressing and once this was done, the project would be launched, Mr. Praveen said.

Meters for plants

In another major effort to rein in water theft and distribution losses, the NRW unit would soon install bulk meters for all five million litre a day (MLD) water treatment plants so that the data on total production, distribution and allied aspects would reach the server at the headquarters from across the State. To run on funds from the Japan International Cooperation Agency, 146 plants from across the State would be brought under the net in the first phase, of which 13 would be in the State capital and the rest, spread over Ernakulam, Kochi, Kasaragod and Kottayam. In the second phase, meters would be installed on 250 more plants.