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## **Mangaluru to get SMS alerts under new water billing system**

Water consumers in Mangaluru city will get automated SMS alerts on bill amount as a new private agency is set to take over water billing of Mangaluru City Corporation from the New Year. Though the agency, MN Compu Solutions, would take over from January, it would take at least a month for the consumers to receive SMS alerts in phases, sources in the civic body told *The Hindu* here on Tuesday.

But all consumers would get the alerts by May, they said and added that the agency was issued with the work order on December 20.

They said that if water meters were not functioning, consumers would get the alert saying “meter not reading”. If they did not respond to get them repaired or install a new meter within a week, a reminder would be sent on their cellphones thereafter.

The selection of the new agency would be dearer to the corporation than earlier. If the corporation paid Rs. 7.25 per bill, now it would have to pay Rs. 9 per bill to the new agency. Officials in the civic body justified it stating that new features have been added under the new contract system. It, in addition to SMS alerts and reminders, has a software-linked system to assess the consumption of water by each connection on quarterly basis. In addition, there is a system to impose fine on the agency, if it failed to issue bill to any connection without any issues (disputes).

The existing contract system, which was more than three years old, did not have these features, they said.

According to the data available with the corporation, it had 81,527 water connections against 1.10 lakh registered property. But the number of water connections need not match with the number of property. It is because, for example, many apartments, though had many flats, had one or two water supply connections. For example, if an apartment had 20 flats (considered as registered property), it would have only one water connection.

The new agency would conduct a survey of all water

connections for four months from January and maintain the data. It was based on the number of property registered.

Meanwhile, Sudhir Shetty Kannur, a councillor, alleged that some areas have not received water bills for the past eight months and some new apartments were not being issued with the bills as the system of contract is in the transition stage.