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## **You will soon pay only for the water you use**

24 May 2009, 0436 hrs IST, Asadullah Hanfi

THANE: The attempts of the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC) to resort to the use of water measuring devices in the retail water distribution

network would materialise from next month. The authorities hope to clamp down on use of excess waters in the process and the consumers would be made to pay for the quantity of waters they use.

According to information, the corporation has taken steps to invite offers from interested parties for the installation of water measuring devices on the water connections of its major water consumers. The tenders would be floated sometime next month and parties would be short listed in the same month subjected to the approval of the Standing Committee (SC) House.

The proposal would be executed in stages over 12 months of time. The contract would be for a period of five years. The civic proposal involves paying the parties for the purchase of the water meters of specified qualities in bulk quantities. Around 30,000 meters would be purchased in the first stage for installation.

The shortlisted contractor would be required to install the meters at the doorsteps of the civic water consumers at the instance of the civic water supply department. The appointed contractor would also be liable to take monthly readings of the installed meters and pass it on to the TMC water supply department. The department would bill the consumers based on the readings provided by the contractors.

The party would also be responsible for carrying out maintenance and repairs of the meters it installed. The contractor would be entitled to collect monthly maintenance charges ranging from Rs 7 to Rs 10 per meter from the concerned consumers directly. The party giving the lowest quotation on maintenance charges would be selected for the contract.

In the first stage, the corporation would fit the meters on the main water supply connections of the major housing societies in the city. Housing societies having more than 200 flats would be selected for the purpose. The TMC would bill the society for the use of waters and the society would be left to share the charges amongst its members.

The proposal would then be extended to smaller housing societies in the next stage. Slum dwellers would, however, be kept off from the project. Slum dwellers would continue to pay fixed water charges per month, while flat owners would be required to pay for the actual waters they consume.

Interestingly, the idea was mooted more than three years ago but it did not get the response from the 116 member corporators. The TMC claimed that it was supplying more water to the consumers in exchange for fixed monthly charges of Rs 160 per month. The corporators claimed otherwise.

The corporation then carried out survey of some major housing societies in the city with the installation of water meters for three months. The results were shocking. The TMC found that the societies were drawing several lakh litres more waters than they paid for under the fixed monthly water charge mechanism.

Since then the corporation had been trying to get the water meters installed but its attempts had been undermined by the members