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## LEGAL METROLOGY'S INITIATIVE IN STAMPING AND VERIFICATION PROCESS IN MAHARASHTRA

Legal Metrology Organization is tasked with main work of verification and stamping of all weights and measures used for commercial transactions in Maharashtra. This work has been traditionally done by the Inspectors who either visit the traders or the traders themselves bring weights and measures to the Legal Metrology offices. In case these weights and measures were not verified as per their schedule the traders face criminal action as per the Legal Metrology Act. This hardship was brought to the notice of the Legal Metrology Organization by the trader community in Maharashtra.

It was decided that the old method of sealing using lead seal is antique and could be replaced by paper seals. Main issue of the paper seals is the security of the paper seals, both in terms of printing as well as distribution. The Legal Metrology Organization discussed this issue with the Government Printing Press Nashik. Government Printing Press Nashik printed a sample of 5,000 paper seals which had adequate security codes so that they could not be copied. These sample paper seals have already been distributed by our Inspectors to the traders in Maharashtra.

In order to get proper distribution the draft memorandum of understanding has been given to the Indian Post Office. Indian Post Office has been requested to distribute these seals to the traders all over Maharashtra through the post office network which is very deep routed (16,000 post offices). This system would ensure that traders even in far-flung villages will be able to receive the seals.

Post office will collect the verification fees, details of which have been provided to the Post office and would charge a sum of approximately Rs.15 towards distribution of each seal. Post office will also recover the cost of the printing of the seal from the users (Rs.8/- Government Printing Press charge). Indian Post Office will remit the verification fees to the Government of

Maharashtra and would also pay the Government Printing Press their cost of printing the seals.

This process has following benefits:-

1. The seals will be available through the Post Offices in Maharashtra to all traders.
2. Once the seal has been procured, and the verification fees has been given to the Post Office the trader would not be held guilty for not having paid or not having verified his weights and measures.
3. The cost of printing of the seals as well as the cost of servicing by the Post office would be directly taken from the users and would have no burden on the Government of Maharashtra.
4. Government of Maharashtra will receive verification fees directly from the Post Office alongwith the computerized statement which as per our estimate will be atleast 50% more than the current number of traders from whom Legal Metrology Organization collects the verification fees.

This is for the first time that this kind of activity is being put into operation by the Legal Metrology Organization anywhere in India. Our preliminary survey with the trader community in Nashik, Nagpur as well as in Kalyan had indicated wide acceptance for this scheme.

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3/8