BEFORE THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN (MUMBAI)

(Appointed by the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission
under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003)

REPRESENTATION NO. 84 OF 2026

In the Matter of Billing after Installation of a Smart Meter

Narendra Dattatray Devkar … …….. …… … …… ……. ….Appellant
(Cons. No. 186590003677)

V/s.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd., Baramati. …. …… ..Respondent
(MSEDCL)

Appearances:

Appellant : Narendra D. Devkar

Respondent : 1. Sachin Korde, Acting Executive Engineer, Baramati Divn.
2. Ganesh Jadhav, Dy. Executive Engineer, Baramati Rural S/dn.

Coram: Vandana Krishna [I.A.S. (Retd.)]

Date of hearing: 21st September 2026

Date of Order: 2nd November 2026

ORDER

This Representation was filed on 17th August 2026 under Regulation 19.1 of the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity Ombudsman) Regulations, 2020 (CGRF & EO Regulations 2020) against the order dated 28th July 2026 passed by the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Baramati Circle (the CGRF) in Case No. 24 of 2026. The Forum rejected the Appellant's grievance application, observing that the existing meter was replaced with a smart meter on 26.04.2025. The smart meter was found to be functioning satisfactorily. The Forum further observed that the Appellant was being billed on the basis of actual meter readings.

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2. Aggrieved by the order passed by the Forum, the Appellant has filed the present Representation. An e-hearing was conducted on 21st September 2026 through video conferencing, wherein both the Appellant and the Respondent were present. The parties were heard at length. The Appellant's submissions and arguments are stated below: *[The Electricity Ombudsman's observations and comments are recorded under 'Notes' where needed.]*

(i) The Appellant is a Residential consumer (No. 186590003677) since 12.12.2014. The particulars of the consumer are tabulated in Table 1 as below:

Table 1

Name of Consumer	Consumer No.	Address	Sanct. Load	Date of Supply	Date of installation of Smart Meter
Narendra Dattatray Devkar	186590003677	Flat No H-1, Devraj River Side, Malad- Baramati, Pin-413102	0.9 kW	12.12.2014	26.04.2025

(ii) The Appellant submitted that he is presently serving as an Indian Army Personnel currently deployed on operational border duties in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, while his parents reside in Baramati and use electricity at the premises in question. He stated that since shifting from Phaltan to Baramati in 2017, the electricity consumption and bills remained normal and proportionate to domestic usage until May 2025, with no history of default or abnormal billing.

(iii) The smart meter was installed in April/May 2025 in his absence while he was on active duty in Jodhpur, without prior intimation to him or his family. He contended that, following the replacement, the monthly bills increased progressively from ₹700–₹800/- to approximately ₹1,950–₹1,990/- despite no change in household appliances or consumption pattern. He alleged that the abnormal increase in billing indicated a possible technical or calibration defect in the installed smart meter.

(iv) The Appellant repeatedly lodged complaints regarding excessive billing through the Mahavitaran Mobile App on 16.06.2025, 15.09.2025, 15.10.2025, 26.10.2025, and other dates. However, the complaints were marked as resolved without any site visit,

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personal contact, or meter testing. He further stated that, despite personally approaching MSEDCL officials at Urja Bhavan, Baramati, and bringing the alleged technical defect to their notice, no effective investigation or on-site testing was undertaken for nearly seven to eight months, notwithstanding repeated assurances by the officials.

(v) The Appellant filed a grievance before the Forum on 01.07.2026 regarding excessive billing from June 2025 onwards. The Forum, by its order dated 28.07.2025, rejected the grievance, observing that the smart meter installed on 26.04.2025 was found to be satisfactorily working, and that the bills were based on actual meter readings. The Forum failed to address the core issue of the abnormal increase in recorded consumption after June 2025 despite no change in household load, and merely observed that the bills were based on actual meter readings. Aggrieved by the Forum's decision, the Appellant filed the present Representation before the Electricity Ombudsman seeking redressal on 17.08.2026.

(vi) After the notice issued by the Electricity Ombudsman, MSEDCL officials removed the smart meter, tested it on 01.09.2026, and reinstalled it without prior written intimation or in his presence, while only his elderly parents were at home. He disputed the validity of the test report (Ref. No. 1410/B-268), **contending that he was not given an opportunity to witness the testing and that the report recorded a test involving only one unit of consumption (from 2352 to 2353 units).**

(vii) The Appellant, therefore, prays that this Electricity Ombudsman may be pleased to:

(a) Declare the Meter Test Report invalid, as the meter testing was conducted without prior intimation to or in the physical presence of the Appellant, thereby denying the Appellant an opportunity to witness and verify the testing process;

(b) Set aside the order of the Forum, for failure to adequately examine the alleged technical anomaly of the sudden increase in recorded units;

(c) In the first alternative, direct the Respondent to revise the disputed electricity bills on the basis of the **average consumption derived from the historical data for the period 2017–2025** and grant consequential billing relief; or

(d) In the second alternative, direct the Respondent **to arrange fresh and transparent meter testing through an independent NABL-accredited**

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laboratory in the physical presence of the Appellant and grant appropriate billing relief in accordance with the test results.

3. The Respondent's submissions and arguments are stated below:

(i) The Appellant has been a Residential consumer (No. 186590003677) since 12.12.2014. The particulars of the consumer are tabulated in Table 1.

(ii) The Appellant's existing meter (Genus make, Meter No. 0650800268) was replaced with a new smart meter (Genus make, Meter No. M42515124648) on 26.04.2025 as part of the smart meter replacement drive. The meter replacement report has been placed on record.

(iii) The Appellant's repeated complaints regarding excessive billing, lodged through the Mahavitaran Mobile App on 16.06.2025, 15.09.2025, 15.10.2025, 26.10.2025 and other dates, were closed with an effective investigation. The grievance was subsequently examined through site inspection by the concerned Section Engineer, testing of the Smart Meter by the Meter Testing Department, Baramati, verification of daily consumption data available on the Online MDMS Portal, and scrutiny of the monthly meter readings. The Respondent further relied upon the Meter Testing Report, which recorded an error of −0.18%, which is within the permissible limits, and the site inspection findings, to contend that no defect affecting the accuracy of the meter had been detected.

(iv) The Appellant filed a grievance before the Forum on 01.07.2026. The Forum, by its order dated 28.07.2025, rejected the grievance, observing that the smart meter installed on 26.04.2025 was found satisfactorily working and that the bills were based on actual meter readings.

(v) **Verification of Daily Readings through the Online MDMS Portal:** The Respondent verified the consumer's daily meter readings and consumption data through the Online Meter Data Management System (MDMS) Portal. The recorded monthly consumption was 179 units for July 2026 and 169 units for August 2026. According to the Respondent, the daily readings available on the portal were analyzed and found to be consistent with the consumer's

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consumption pattern of approximately 5 to 5.5 units per day. The relevant extracts of the daily readings obtained from the MDMS Portal are taken on record for reference and verification.

(vi) **Testing of Smart Meter by the Meter Testing Department:** The Appellant's meter was removed on 01.09.2025 and sent to the Meter Testing Laboratory, Baramati, for testing. The meter, bearing Serial No. M42515124648 of Genus make, was tested by the competent Meter Testing Laboratory using a standard meter connected in series under a variable-load condition. As recorded in the Meter Testing Report, the initial meter reading was 2352 units and the final reading was 2353 units. The percentage error between the consumption recorded by the meter under test and the standard meter was found to be **−0.18%**, which was reported to be within the permissible limits. Accordingly, the testing department concluded that the meter was functioning correctly and that no defect affecting its accuracy was detected during the test. The Meter Testing Report is taken on record. Upon completion of the testing, the same meter was re-installed at the Appellant's premises.

(vii) **Site Inspection:** The Section Engineer carried out a site inspection of the consumer's premises on 12.11.2025. As recorded in the Site Inspection Report, the electricity connection was being used for domestic/residential purposes, and the total connected load was found to be 2.628 kW (The connected load comprised 20 lamps of 1 W each (20 W), 4 LED lamps of 7 W each (28 W), one television of 150 W, three fans of 60 W each (180 W), one refrigerator of 250 W and one geyser of 2,000 W, aggregating to a total connected load of 2,628 W (2.628 kW)). The seals of the meter bearing No. M42515124648 were found intact. The meter recorded a maximum demand of 2.284 kW, voltage of 244 V, current of 1.12 A, and power factor of 0.377. The Respondent considered the recorded maximum demand to commensurate with the connected load and, on that basis, contended that the electricity bills issued to the consumer were correct and consistent with the consumption recorded by the meter. The Site Inspection Report is taken on record.

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(viii) **Billing Based on Actual Smart Meter Readings:** The Respondent further submitted that the consumer's electricity bills were generated on the basis of readings automatically recorded by the Smart Meter and that the billing was not based on arbitrary or manually estimated consumption. According to the Respondent, the billing records corresponded with the meter reading and consumption data recorded by the Smart Meter.

(ix) In view of the foregoing, the Appellant's grievance had been examined and verified at various levels by considering the following records: (a) the Site Inspection Report of the concerned Section Engineer; (b) the Meter Testing Report issued by the Meter Testing Department, Baramati; (c) the daily consumption readings analyzed through the Online MDMS Portal; and (d) the monthly meter readings automatically recorded by the Smart Meter. On the basis of the aforesaid verification, the Respondent contended that no billing irregularity or defect in the Smart Meter had been established and requested that the Appellant's grievance be disposed of accordingly.

(x) In view of the above, the Respondent prays that the representation of the Appellant be rejected.

4. During the course of hearing, the Appellant was given two options for verifying the accuracy of the Smart Meter:

a. Testing the meter at an NABL-accredited laboratory; or

b. Installing an additional tested meter in series to verify the accuracy of the existing meter. The Appellant opted for testing the meter at a laboratory.

Accordingly, during the hearing held on 21.09.2026, the Respondent was directed to arrange for testing of the meter at an NABL-accredited laboratory, subject to payment of the prescribed testing charges by the Appellant.

5. Pursuant to the aforesaid direction, the Executive Engineer, Baramati, vide email dated 30.09.2026, requested TQA Laboratory, Pune, to furnish a quotation and arrange for testing of the Smart Meter installed at the Appellant's residential premises (Consumer No.

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186590003677). The TQA Laboratory scheduled the testing for **09.10.2026 at 10:00 a.m. at the Fursungi Laboratory, Pune**. However, the Appellant requested that the testing be deferred until his return to Baramati during his forthcoming official military leave. Since the requested deferment would further delay the proceedings beyond the prescribed period of two months for disposal of the Representation, the request was not approved by the competent authority. Further, the prescribed meter testing charges have not been paid by the Appellant to date.

6. Subsequently, vide email dated 14.10.2026, the Appellant proposed adopting the alternative option of installing an additional meter in series with the existing Smart Meter to verify its accuracy. Thus, although the Appellant had initially opted for laboratory testing, he subsequently requested verification through the series-meter method.

7. Accordingly, the Respondent installed a non-smart check meter in series with the existing Smart Meter on 15.10.2026 at 4:00 p.m. to verify the accuracy of the recorded consumption. The Appellant was requested to monitor the daily readings of both meters. This time, as per the Electricity Ombudsman's directions, the test was conducted for a longer period of 7 days for more accurate and reliable results. After seven days, the readings were recorded on 22.10.2026 at 6:12 p.m., and the series meter was removed. The Respondent, Asst. Engineer informed the recorded units reports which are as detailed below:

Table 2

Meter Details	**Original Meter (Smart Meter)**	**Check Meter (Non-Smart Meter)**
Meter Manufacturer	Genus	Genus
Meter Serial No.	M42515124648	1350678
Initial Reading (15.10.2026 at 4:00 PM)	2645 kWh	1986 kWh
Final Reading (22.10.2026 at 6:12 PM)	2690 kWh	2031 kWh
Total Energy Consumption	**45 Units**	**45 Units**

Thus, the readings of both the meters matched perfectly.

Analysis and Ruling

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8. Heard the parties and perused the documents placed on record.

9. The Appellant contended that, following the installation of a smart meter on 26.04.2025, his electricity bills increased abnormally despite no change in domestic consumption. He alleged that his complaints were not properly investigated and challenged the Forum's order dated 28.07.2026 and the validity of the meter test report dated 01.09.2026. He sought revision of the disputed bills based on historical consumption or fresh testing by an independent NABL-accredited laboratory. During the hearing on 21.09.2026, the Appellant opted for laboratory testing, but subsequently sought deferment and, vide email dated 14.10.2026, proposed installation of an additional meter in series with the existing smart meter.

10. The Respondent contended that, to verify the accuracy of the existing smart meter, a check meter was installed in series with it from 15.10.2026 to 22.10.2026. Both meters were manufactured by Genus. During the observation period, the original smart meter (Serial No. M42515124648) recorded an increase from 2645 kWh to 2690 kWh, while the check meter (Serial No. 1350678) recorded an increase from 1986 kWh to 2031 kWh. Thus, **both meters recorded identical consumption of 45 units.** The Respondent stated that these results established the accuracy of the existing smart meter and supported the correctness of the consumption recorded for billing purposes.

11. The Appellant's electricity consumption for the period from April 2024 to September 2026 as per Consumer Personal Ledger is tabulated below:

Table 3

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Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Month	Cons. (Units)	Cons. (Units)	Cons. (Units)
Apr	58	57	135
May	62	67	139
Jun	82	128	172
Jul	44	129	179
Aug	46	135	169
Sep	63	134	166
Oct	58	173	
Nov	71	146	
Dec	19	124	
Jan	26	152	
Feb	48	125	
Mar	49	108	
Total	**626**	**1478**	**960**
Avg/Mth	**52**	**123**	**160**
Note	Smart meter was installed on 26.04.2025		

12. The following issues are framed for determination:

Issue	Particulars	Finding
Issue No. 1	Whether the Respondent's smart meter is recording electricity consumption accurately?	Affirmative
Issue No. 2	Whether the Appellant is entitled to revision of the disputed bills from June 2025 onwards, or any other consequential relief?	Negative

Findings:

The Respondent installed a check meter in series with the existing smart meter for the period from 15.10.2026 to 22.10.2026 to verify the accuracy of the latter. The record indicates that the existing smart meter (Serial No. M42515124648) recorded consumption of 45 units, increasing from 2645 kWh to 2690 kWh, while the check meter (Serial No. 1350678) also recorded consumption of 45 units, increasing from 1986 kWh to 2031 kWh. Thus, both meters recorded identical consumption during the observation period, and no discrepancy in the energy recorded by the existing smart meter was observed. This comparative verification supports the

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Respondent's contention that the existing smart meter was recording consumption accurately. The newly installed smart meter was found to be functioning satisfactorily. Accordingly, Issue No. 1 is answered in the Affirmative and Issue No. 2 in the Negative.

13. The Forum has rightly analyzed the case and hence no interference in the order of the Forum is needed. The Forum's order is upheld, and the Representation is rejected and disposed of accordingly.

14. The Appellant is advised to get his electrical installation checked by a qualified electrician to ensure proper earthing, sound wiring and the absence of electrical leakage or other defects. The high electricity consumption may be attributable to one or more of the following factors:

- Excessive operating hours of geysers and water pumps.
- Low energy efficiency of old refrigerators, conventional fans and inefficient air conditioners.
- Inappropriate appliance settings, including unnecessarily high geyser thermostat settings.
- Mechanical defects, such as damaged refrigerator door seals, faulty thermostats or continuously running water pumps.
- Standby power consumption by televisions, set-top boxes, computers and chargers, even when not actively in use.
- Unnoticed operation of water pumps, electric heaters or other appliances left switched on.
- Any unauthorized tapping or connection of electrical load downstream of the meter, if present.

The Appellant is therefore advised to inspect and maintain the electrical installation and appliances periodically, identify and rectify any defects or unauthorized connections, and adopt energy-efficient practices to control electricity consumption. Proper earthing and wiring should be verified by a qualified electrician in the interest of electrical safety and efficient utilization of electricity.

Sd/
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