In blow to inspector raj, govt amends key part of metrology law

Dipak.Dash@timesgroup.com

New Delhi:

In yet another move to end 'inspector raj', the government has amended a key provision in the Legal Metrology Rules, which empowered officers to initiate prosecution against directors of companies even for minor offences relating to weights and measures. Now, companies having several establishments or units can "nominate" officers or executives who can be held responsible for such offences.

"This change has been made for the ease of doing business and to stop harassment of top directors or owners of the companies for small violations in weights and measures. There were representations from various industries to allow nominating the persons who actually have the authority and responsibility of the establishment or unit and not the directors. We have held several roundsof discussions. They can't be held for violation by one branch or unit," consumer affairs secretary Rohit Kumar Singh told TOI.

Sources said the earlier provision had become a tool for harassment as the inspectors in state legal metrology departments would slap notices on the directors and owners.

The ministry said Section 49 of the Legal Metrology Act allows the companies to nominate any of its directors as a person responsible for the business of the company. Earlier, in case of violations under the Act, the prosecutions were initiated against the directors. The change will also reduce compliance burden.

In 2020, the ministry had circulated a draft proposal to amend the rules and allow firms to nominate at managerial level rather than at director level since "the board of directors may not be involved in day to day functioning of the company".