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Press Release

Power theft does not pay

Call Centre owner gets 1 year Rigorous Imprisonment, Penalty of Rs 25.5 lakh

- **Power Theft Remains a Major Menace for Discoms and Honest Consumers in Delhi**
- **Consumers can Whats App video / photographs on power theft on:**
 - **BRPL (South and West Delhi) 9555010022**
 - **BYPL (East and Central Delhi) 8588892156**

Power theft does not pay. Learning it the hard way, a call centre owner has been awarded 1 year Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) and levied a penalty (Fine + Civil Liability) of over Rs 25 lakh by Special Court of Electricity, Dwarka. In case of default in paying the fine, he will further undergo Simple Imprisonment (SI) of three months.

The judgement of Mr Gulshan Kumar (Addl Sessions Judge, Dwarka), says, “...His defence does not inspire confidence as accused was very much present at the time of inspection and he is covered in the videography. It shows that accused has taken a bald plea without any merits...”

Awarding Rigorous Imprisonment, the order says “I am of the considered opinion that this is an economic offence wherein the society as a whole is the victim and the honest payers of electricity charges are the sufferers on account of the proved conduct of the convicts. Such convicts are getting unearned benefit at the costs of others. Accordingly, the interest of justice shall be served by directing the convict to undergo RI for a period of one year.”

“...Accordingly, the convict is directed to pay fine of Rs.14, 75,064/-. In default of fine, convict shall further undergo SI for a period of three months.”

On the issue of Civil Liability, the order says, “As the can he has failed to discharge his onus that he was not using the energy for preceding 12 months, he is directed to pay the amount of the theft bill no. AGENR290720100005 as Rs.9, 83,376/- towards his civil liability”.

Case

Earlier, the convicted person (Mr Vipin Sharma) was found indulging in direct theft of over 18 KW of electricity for running a mid-sized call centre at RZ-D-3/249. First Floor, Gali No 9, Mahavir Enclave, Palam Colony. It was being run under the name ‘One stop marketing solutions’. Even though a switch-board was found at the premises, no meter was found installed on site.

Based on the regulations, Mr Sharma was summoned for the offence U/S 135 of Electricity Act on the basis of pre summoning evidence. Copy of the complaint and documents were supplied to the accused. Notice U/S 251 Cr.PC was given to the accused to which he had pleaded not guilty and had claimed trial.

According to a BSES spokesperson, “We appeal to consumers to join the fight against power theft. Consumers can shoot-videos and photographs of power theft and Whats App them (along with the location address) to centralized numbers. Identity of the people reporting power theft will be kept confidential. For BRPL (South and West Delhi), consumers can Whats App on 9555010022 and for BYPL (East and Central Delhi) on 8588892156.

Concerns on power theft

Power theft is not only resulting in substantial revenue loss to the discoms, but is also increasing the number of trippings and local breakdowns manifold. Efforts of discom enforcement teams to check the irregularities are thwarted by organised gangs on many occasions. Whenever enforcement teams reach these areas, these gangs ‘gherao’ them and don’t let them check their premises.

Though Delhi discoms have managed to reduce AT & C losses from over 55% to under 15% in the last 14 years, still, there are areas in Najafgargh, Jaffarpur, Mundka, Nangloi, Seelampur, Nand Nagari, Yamuna Vihar, and Karawal Nagar, Shaheen Bagh where power theft continues to be a concern. It is also rampant in some unauthorised colonies.

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