ELECTRICITY CGRF
(Under The Electricity Act, 2003)
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS
SRI VIJAYA PURAM
****

Before:

Shri. R. Ravichandar, Chairman.
Shri. Narayan Chandra Baroi, Member (Licensee).
Smt. Biji Thomas, Independent Member.

In the matter of:

Shri. R. Nooka Rao, R/o RGT Road, Near Raj Niwas Power House, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman.

.....Complainant

Versus

The Electricity Department, A & N Administration, Sri Vijaya Puram.

.....Respondent

Complaint No. : ANI/CG No. 19/2025 dated 17/07/2025.
Complaint : Excess billing bearing Consumer No. D2/3664 (Domestic).
Date of Hearing : 05/08/2025
Date of Order : 06/08/2025

ORDER

Background

Shri. R. Nooka Rao, R/o RGT Road, Near Raj Niwas Power House, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman, filed a complaint vide R.D. No. 1261 dated 17/07/2025 regarding any billing discrepancies towards the Consumer No. D2/3664 (Domestic).

The complaint was registered and forwarded to the Respondent (Electricity Department) on 21/07/2025 to the AE(W/shop), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Executive Engineer (HQ) and Assistant Engineer-I (HQ), Electricity Department for submitting reply/comments within 15 days and also a copy of this letter was endorsed to the complainant for information and for attending the hearing on 05/08/2025 at 10.30 am in the Prothrapur Site office, Electricity Department, SVP. ***(Exbt. -1)***.

Hearing on 05/08/2025

The Hearing was held on 05/08/2025 at 10.30 am in the Aberdeen Site Office, Office of the AE-1, Electricity Department due to renovation work at Hearing Hall of the Electricity CGRF Office. The following were present: -

(i) Shri. R. Nooka Rao, Complainant.
(ii) Shri. R. Janaki Rao, Asst. Complainant.
(iii) Shri. Naveen Lall, AE-III, Elect. Dept.
(iv) Smti. Rajesh Kumar Singh, JE, Elect. Dept.
(v) Shri. Padmanabhan, LMMR, Elect. Dept.

Statement of the Complainant

Shri. R. Nooka Rao, R/o RGT Road, Near Raj Niwas Power House, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman stated in his complaint dated 17/07/2025 stated that *"Sir, With due respect, I would like to state that my domestic Electric Meter Connection vide No. D2/3664 has been raised huge excessive bill amount and the Units of Reading also raised falsely by your good department.*

The details of the Actual Reading and False Reading of Units are as follows:

Actual Reading of Units	***False Reading of Units raised by Electricity Department***
Meter Reading as on 08.01.2025=5911 Units	*Meter Reading as on 01.01.2025=5855 Units*
Meter Reading as on 08.02.2025=6077 Units	*Meter Reading as on 01.02.2025=6088 Units*
Meter Reading as on 01.03.2025=6181 Units	*Meter Reading as on 08.03.2025=6210 Units*

That Sir, regarding to the above cited issues, I have approached the concerned authority and asked that why such types of false unit raised by the department, but the official does not bother to listen my issues and arrogantly behaves with me, since last one year the matter is dragging.

Therefore, it is requesting your good self to look into this matter and take necessary action against the concerned authority and also to rectify the errors in the Units and huge excess bill amounts and make necessary arrangements to provide the actual reading of units and actual amount of bills in the said Electric Meter.

An early action in this regard is highly solicited."

The Complainant enclosed photocopies of letter to the SE, Elect. Dept. dated 11.03.2025, letter to the AE, Elect. Dept. dated 28.02.2025, e-bill and Driving license as ID proof, which is kept in the case file **(Exbt. -2)**.

Reply of the Respondent/Licensee (ED)

The Assistant Engineer-I submitted para-wise comments on behalf of the Respondent vide letter No. EL/AE/SD-I/HQ/25-5/2025/517 dated 29/07/2025 stated that: -

"Sir, with reference to the office letter No. mentioned above regarding the subject cited above. I am here by submitting the report which is available with the office along with the test report that we have received from EESL.

1) Consumer profile/Ledger sheet from January-2023 to till month (June-2025) of consumer bearing AC No. D2/3664 for Category - Domestic 1 phase. (Enclosed)

2) Smart meter detailed report collect from EESL through mail. (Enclosed)

3) EESL Online reading received report through IT Section, Electricity Department. (Enclosed)

This is for your kind information and necessary action please."

The AE-I, Electricity Department enclosed photocopies of mail sent to EESL, mail received from EESL, Consumer Ledger and EESL's online reading, which is kept in the case file **(Exbt. -3)**.

Submission of the Complainant

The complainant, a domestic electricity consumer, expressed serious dissatisfaction with the way the Respondent handled the billing and meter reading process for their account. They alleged that not only were the billed units inflated, but the physical readings taken on-site by them did not match the readings shown in the bills issued by the Respondent. The complainant mentioned that despite several efforts to meet with officials and resolve the matter amicably, they were met with indifference and unprofessional conduct. They emphasized that the inflated bills have created unnecessary financial stress and sought immediate rectification and accountability from the concerned Respondent.

Submission of the Respondent (Licensee)

The respondent provided a formal reply supported by documents and meter data reports. They clarified that the discrepancy in the meter readings arose due to the manual reading practices adopted after the introduction of smart meter and if the smart meter ceased to communicate with the main server the manual readings were taken. The Respondent maintained that all readings were taken in accordance with standard procedures but admitted that practical difficulties prevented them from recording readings on a fixed date on every month. They asserted that if the meter was functioning correctly and the billed amounts were derived based on manual inspections. The respondent urged that the current method is a temporary arrangement until communication is restored with the smart meter.

Forum's Observation

The case pertains to a billing dispute raised by a domestic consumer of the Respondent, whose electric meter bears Account Number D2/3664. The complainant alleged that the electricity bills issued by the Respondent showed excessive consumption and incorrect unit readings when compared to the actual readings observed at the site. The dispute primarily concerns the billing period from January 2025 to March 2025, during which the complainant claims that the meter readings recorded by the Respondent did not align with the actual meter readings noted by the consumer on different dates.

Upon escalation, the complainant approached the concerned authorities but faced unsatisfactory responses and alleged rude behavior from departmental staff. The matter remained unresolved for over a year, prompting the complainant to seek intervention from the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum (CGRF).

The Respondent submitted relevant documents including the consumer ledger, smart meter data from EESL, and online readings received via the IT section. The Respondent clarified that due to the non-communication status of the smart meter since June 2022, readings were being recorded manually, which occasionally led to the discrepancies due to the variation in reading dates.

The complainant has raised a grievance regarding the issuance of inflated electricity bills and erroneous unit readings recorded against their domestic meter connection D2/3664. According to the complainant, the Respondent recorded higher units than the actual consumption. The consumer presented specific dates along with comparative readings to support their claim that the units mentioned in the bills were excessive and did not match the actual physical meter readings noted by them.

Despite multiple visits to the Respondent seeking clarification and rectification, the complainant stated that the concerned official failed to provide a satisfactory explanation and behaved in an uncooperative and arrogant manner. The issue remained unresolved for over a year, which caused mental distress and financial burden to the consumer. The complainant requested the forum to take corrective action, rectify the meter readings, revise the excessive bills, and ensure fair billing in future cycles.

In response to the allegations made by the complainant, the respondent submitted a formal reply citing that all available documents and reports had been reviewed and forwarded to the forum. The respondent enclosed the following:

1. The consumer's ledger sheet from January 2023 to June 2025.
2. A smart meter report sourced from Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
3. Online meter reading data received via the department's IT section.

The respondent explained that since June 2022, the consumer's smart meter has been in non-communication mode, and thus, the Respondent has been recording readings manually. This manual process sometimes results in variations in the reading dates, leading to perceived discrepancies in units billed. The Respondent affirmed that the readings recorded were accurate as per manual inspection and available data.

After examining the statements from both parties and reviewing the enclosed documents, the Forum noted that the complainant had a legitimate concern regarding mismatch between actual and billed meter readings.

The Respondent admitted that due to the non-communicative status of the smart meter since June 2022, readings were being recorded manually. The discrepancy in billed units arose primarily because the manual readings were not being taken on fixed, regular dates aligned with the billing cycle. The online data from EESL was not being received consistently, further compounding the issue. The delay in taking consistent and timely readings led to confusion and the possibility of inflated billing.

The forum acknowledged the technical constraints faced by the Respondent but emphasized the need for consistent, transparent, and consumer-verified reading practices.

Considering the persistent communication issues with the consumer's smart meter since June 2022, and the resulting practical difficulties in taking manual meter readings on every month on fixed dates due to the shortage of meter reading staffs, the respondent should explore the possibility of introducing the bi-monthly billing under the Regulation clause 7.1(1) of Chapter 7 (Billing – General) in the JERC Supply Code Regulations, 2018 after proper consultation with the stake holders and with the approval of the Commission.

Hence, the Forum directs the respondent to make immediate action to sort out the issue of non-communication of the existing smart meter with the main server or replace the meter on priority. The Forum also directs the respondent to make the maximum extend possible to read the meter on the same day on every month to full fill the billing cycle and convince the same to the consumer to ensuring compliance with JERC regulations and protecting the consumer interests.

Hence,

It is Ordered:

After detailed documents produced before the Forum, and on the basis of the observation so reached, the following Order is passed: -

1. The Complaint No. ANI/CG No. 19/2025 is hereby closed with specific directions to the Complainant and the Respondent.
2. The Forum directs the Respondent to ensure that manual readings are taken exactly or as close as possible to the same date on every month, to maintaining a monthly billing cycle as per JERC regulations. All the meter readings must be recorded in the presence of the consumer whenever possible.

3. The Recorded meter readings should be conveyed and explained to the consumer on site, and if required, documented via a consumer acknowledgment.
4. The Forum directs the Respondent should rectify any previous billing errors that occurred due to the inconsistent of meter reading intervals.
5. The Forum directs the Respondent should make efforts to restore the communication of the smart meter through EESL or replace the meter, if necessary. In the interim, until smart meter communication is restored, manual reading data must be cross-verified and documented.
6. The Respondent should explore the possibility of introducing the bi-monthly billing due to shortage of meter reading staff under the Regulation clause 7.1(1) of Chapter 7 (Billing – General) in the JERC Supply Code Regulations, 2018 after proper consultation with the stake holders and with the approval of the Commission.
7. The Complainant is advised to install an Earth Leakage Protective Device (ELPD) in the premises to detect and prevent any earth leakage, which could lead to excessive power consumption or safety of electrical equipment.
8. The Complainant should conduct periodic checks of the internal electrical wiring and the condition of the electricity meter to ensure accurate billing and safety.
9. The Respondent is directed to submit ***compliance report within 15 days*** from the date of receipt of this order as per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024.
10. As per JERC Regulation No. 31/2024 under Chapter-III of 30, non-compliance of the Forum Order shall be treated as violation of the Regulations of the Commission and accordingly liable for action under Section 142 of the Electricity Act 2003.
11. The complainant shall not be harassed overtly or covertly in any manner whatsoever in future for exercising his right by availing the redressal within his jurisdiction.

"The complainant, if aggrieved, by non-redressal of his / her grievance by the Forum or non-implementation of CGRF order by the Licensee, may make an Appeal prescribed Annexure-IV, to the ***Electricity Ombudsman, Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission for the State of Goa and UTs,*** 3rd Floor, Udyog Vihar, Phase, Sector-18, Gurugram - 122015 (Haryana). Phone - 0124-4684709, E-mail: ombudsman.jercuts@gov.in ***within one month from the date of receipt of this order".***

[Annexure – IV Appeal Form can be collected from the office of the Forum on any of the working days].

A certified copy of this Order be sent to the Superintending Engineer (Licensee/Respondent), Executive Engineer (HQ), Nodal Officer (CGRF), Assistant Engineer-I(HQ), Assistant Engineer (IT), Electricity Department, Complainant and the Electricity Ombudsman, JERC for the State of Goa & UTs, Gurugram, (Haryana).

6/8/25

(Biji Thomas)
Independent Member
Electricity CGRF

Narayan 6/8/2025

(Narayan Chandra Baroi)
Member (Licensee)
Electricity CGRF

6/8/25

(R. Ravichandar)
Chairman
Electricity CGRF

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