BEFORE THE ELECTRICITY OMBUDSMAN
(For the State of Goa and Union Territories)
Under Section 42 (6) of the Electricity Act, 2003

3rd Floor, Plot No. 55-56, Udyog Vihar - Phase IV, Sector 18
Gurugram (Haryana) 122015,
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Appeal No-274 of 2026

Date of Hearing: 10.08.2026 & 12.08.2026
Mode: Videoconferencing
Date of Order: 13.08.2026

In the matter of
Mr. Dinesh Kumar,
4037-G, Customs Colony,
Sector-37C, Chandigarh 160036. ...Appellant

Versus

Executive Engineer,
'OP' Div-3, CPDL,
Chandigarh. ...Respondent(s)

In the matter of Mr. Dinesh Kumar Versus Executive Engineer, 'OP' Div-3, CPDL, Chandigarh

Present:

Appellant

1. Mr. Dinesh Kumar — Appellant in person

Respondent(s)

1. Mr. Ankush Sethi, Executive Engineer, CPDL
2. Mr Dhruv Shakuntlam, Sr. Executive Legal, CPDL, Chandigarh
3. Mr. Bhanu Mishra, Sr. Manager (Meters)

ORDER

The present representation was filed on 11.07.2026 under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003 read with Regulations 35 and 36 of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (Consumer Grievances Redressal Forum and Ombudsman) Regulations, 2024, challenging the order dated 16.06.2026 passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh in Case No.H-42/2026 dated 22.04.2026

Upon scrutiny, and being satisfied that the representation fulfilled the requirements prescribed under the Regulations, the same was admitted and notice was issued on 16.07.2026. A copy of the representation was forwarded to the Respondent– Executive Engineer, 'OP' Div-3, CPDL, Chandigarh calling upon them to submit their reply/comments.

The Commercial Manager 3, CPDL Sub Division-7, Chandigarh vide Email dated 27.07.2026 has filed the comments/ reply to the petition filed by the Appellant which is taken on record.

A. Clarification regarding impleadment of the CGRF as Respondent No. 2

The following reasoning would be legally sustainable and consistent with the scheme of Section 42 of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the JERC (Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum and Electricity Ombudsman) Regulations.

Impleadment of Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum

At the outset, it is observed that the Appellant has arrayed the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh, as Respondent No. 2 in the present Appeal. The said impleadment is legally misconceived.

The Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum is a statutory quasi-judicial authority constituted under Section 42(5) of the Electricity Act, 2003 for adjudication of consumer grievances. Having discharged its statutory adjudicatory function by passing the impugned Final Order dated 17.06.2026 in Complaint No. H-42/26, the Forum does not assume the character of a contesting party in appellate proceedings before the Electricity Ombudsman.

The appellate jurisdiction of the Electricity Ombudsman under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act is directed against the order passed by the Forum and not against the Forum itself. The role of the Forum is confined to transmission of the records of the proceedings whenever called upon by the Ombudsman. It is neither required nor expected to defend the correctness of its own order before the appellate authority, except where any factual clarification or production of records is specifically sought.

Accordingly, the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh, is not a necessary or proper party to the present proceedings. The impleadment of Respondent No. 2 is therefore treated as redundant and stands ignored for the purposes of adjudication. The Appeal shall proceed only against the Distribution Licensee, which is the contesting Respondent.

This approach avoids "striking off" the CGRF as a party by a separate order and simply records that its impleadment is unnecessary. This is generally preferable for judicial consistency.

B. Submissions on behalf of the Appellant

The Appellant submitted that the impugned Final Order dated 17.06.2026 passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum suffers from serious legal as well as factual infirmities and is liable to be set aside.

It was contended that the dispute pertains to an abnormal electricity bill reflecting consumption of 1333 units during the billing period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026, which was wholly inconsistent with the Appellant's historical pattern of electricity consumption. According to the Appellant, the Respondent failed to furnish any satisfactory technical explanation for such an isolated and extraordinary increase in consumption.

The Appellant submitted that for several years preceding the disputed billing cycle, his electricity consumption had remained within the normal range and, significantly, immediately after the disputed period, the recorded consumption again reduced to 196 units, 137 units and 228 units respectively. It was argued that this consistent consumption pattern itself demonstrated that the disputed consumption of 1333 units constituted an unexplained anomaly requiring proper technical investigation.

It was further submitted that during the proceedings before the CGRF, a parallel/check meter was installed pursuant to the directions of the Forum. At the time of its removal, the Appellant allegedly noticed a discrepancy between the reading displayed on the parallel meter and the reading recorded by the officials of the Respondent. The Appellant claims to have immediately recorded his objection in writing on the inspection sheet and subsequently brought the same to the notice of the Forum.

The Appellant further submitted that the CGRF thereafter directed assessment of the connected load at the premises, pursuant to which an inspection was conducted on 03.06.2026. However, according to the Appellant, neither the connected load inspection report, nor the calculation sheet, nor the methodology adopted for such assessment was supplied to him during the pendency of the proceedings. It was argued that despite this, the CGRF substantially relied upon the connected load assessment while rejecting the complaint, thereby denying the Appellant an effective opportunity to examine or rebut the material relied upon against him.

It was also argued that a connected load assessment merely indicates the electrical capacity connected at the premises and cannot by itself establish the actual electricity consumed during an earlier billing period. According to the Appellant, the impugned order erroneously treated the connected load assessment as conclusive proof of the correctness of the disputed consumption without examining whether such connected load had actually been utilized during the relevant billing cycle.

The Appellant further submitted that the CGRF failed to adequately consider several specific grievances raised before it, including the alleged non-service of the bill dated 15.03.2026, the levy of arrears and surcharge even before expiry of the due date of the said bill, the billing chronology, and the circumstances in which the disputed amount had been paid under protest to avoid coercive action and disconnection of electricity supply.

The Appellant also contended that immediately after the passing of the impugned order, he sought copies of the hearing proceedings, inspection report, connected load assessment, detailed calculation sheet, methodology adopted and other documents relied upon by the Forum. According to him, while only a copy of the inspection sheet was furnished by the Distribution Licensee, neither the requested methodology nor the remaining documents were supplied and no response was received from the CGRF, thereby prejudicing his right to effectively challenge the impugned findings.

On the aforesaid grounds, the Appellant submitted that the impugned order proceeds on incomplete appreciation of the material available on record, fails to analyze the historical consumption pattern, relies upon material allegedly not disclosed during the proceedings, and does not satisfactorily explain the basis for accepting the abnormal consumption of 1333 units. The Appellant, therefore, prayed that the impugned order be set aside, the disputed bill be re-examined in accordance with law after considering the historical consumption pattern and other relevant evidence, and appropriate consequential relief including adjustment or refund of any excess amount recovered be granted.

C. Submissions on behalf of the Respondent

The Respondent submitted that the present Appeal is devoid of merit and seeks to assail a well-reasoned order passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh ("CGRF") after affording adequate opportunity of hearing to both parties. It was contended that the findings recorded by the CGRF are based upon the pleadings, documentary evidence and the applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the JERC (Electricity Supply Code) Regulations, 2018, and therefore do not warrant any interference in appellate jurisdiction.

The Respondent submitted that the Appellant has failed to establish any illegality, perversity or jurisdictional error in the impugned order. According to the Respondent, the disputed bill dated 15.03.2026 was generated strictly on the basis of the actual meter readings recorded by the installed electricity meter, which was found to be functioning correctly. It was contended that under the applicable statutory provisions, electricity bills are required to be raised on the basis of actual recorded consumption, and once the meter is found to be recording accurately, the readings carry a presumption of correctness unless rebutted by cogent technical evidence. The Appellant, according to the Respondent, has produced no such evidence to displace the correctness of the recorded consumption.

The Respondent further submitted that the principal contention of the Appellant, namely that the disputed bill should be rejected on the basis of his historical consumption pattern, is legally untenable. It was argued that a distribution licensee cannot disregard actual meter readings and substitute them with historical average consumption where the installed meter is found to be accurate. According to the Respondent, the CGRF rightly rejected this contention after considering the results of the check meter verification as well as the connected load inspection conducted at the consumer's premises.

The Respondent submitted that the Appellant is a domestic consumer having Account No. 307/3752/403705E with a sanctioned load of 1.220 kW. During the disputed billing cycle from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026, the installed meter recorded consumption of 1333 units, with the meter reading increasing from 644 kWh to 1977 kWh. Consequently, the bill dated 15.03.2026 for Rs. 6,250/- was raised strictly on the basis of the actual meter reading recorded during the regular billing process.

It was further submitted that the subsequent bill for the period 11.02.2026 to 11.03.2026 reflected consumption of 196 units, corresponding to the increase in meter reading from 1977 kWh to 2173 kWh, thereby demonstrating continuity in meter recording. The Respondent also clarified that the unpaid amount of the earlier bill was correctly reflected as arrears in the subsequent bill in accordance with the prescribed billing procedure.

The Respondent further explained that the transition from bi-monthly billing to monthly billing was implemented pursuant to the directions issued by the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission in its Tariff Order dated 25.07.2024. It was submitted that the Respondent, being a distribution licensee, was under a statutory obligation to implement monthly billing in accordance with the JERC Electricity Supply Code Regulations, 2018, and therefore no grievance could be sustained merely on account of the change in the billing cycle.

The Respondent submitted that upon receipt of the Appellant's complaint regarding the disputed bill, the billing records and meter data were duly verified and it was found that the bill had been generated strictly on the basis of actual recorded consumption. The Appellant was informed accordingly through various communications. Copies of the relevant electricity bills, load inspection report, check meter report, meter reading photographs, email correspondence and consumption history were relied upon in support of the Respondent's stand.

The Respondent further submitted that the documentary evidence on record conclusively establishes that the impugned demand is founded exclusively on the actual consumption recorded by the installed meter. According to the Respondent, there is neither any allegation nor any evidence that the electricity meter was defective, inaccurate or malfunctioning during the relevant period.

With regard to the findings recorded by the CGRF, the Respondent submitted that the connected load inspection conducted on 03.06.2026 was not treated as conclusive proof of the disputed consumption. Rather, the primary basis of the bill remained the actual meter readings. According to the Respondent, the connected load inspection, which revealed a connected load of 4.859 kW against the sanctioned load of 1.220 kW, merely demonstrated that the premises possessed sufficient electrical capacity to consume the energy reflected in the disputed bill, thereby negating the Appellant's contention that such consumption was physically impossible.

The Respondent denied the Appellant's contention that reliance on historical consumption could invalidate the actual meter readings. It was argued that electricity bills are raised on the basis of actual energy consumed and not on the basis of previous consumption trends or averages.

The Respondent also denied the allegations of violation of the principles of natural justice. It was submitted that the check meter was installed and removed in the presence of the Appellant, the connected load inspection was conducted at his premises, and the Appellant actively participated in the proceedings before the CGRF, including the hearings held on 11.05.2026 and 02.06.2026. According to the Respondent, the Appellant was fully aware of the verification exercises undertaken and no prejudice whatsoever had been caused to him.

The Respondent further denied the allegations relating to the inclusion of arrears and surcharge in the subsequent bill. It was submitted that the bill dated 24.03.2026 merely carried forward the unpaid amount of the previous bill in accordance with the applicable billing procedure, and that the issuance of monthly bills following implementation of the Commission's directions fully explained the billing chronology.

Finally, the Respondent submitted that the findings recorded by the Learned CGRF are based upon proper appreciation of the evidence, documentary material and applicable statutory provisions. According to the Respondent, the Appellant has failed to establish any legal or factual infirmity warranting interference by this Authority. The Respondent, therefore, prayed that the Appeal be dismissed and the impugned order of the Learned CGRF be upheld.

D. REJOINDER ON BEHALF OF THE APPELLANT TO THE REPLY DATED 27.07.2026 FILED BY THE RESPONDENT

The Appellant, in response to the reply dated 27.07.2026 filed by the Respondent, has filed a Rejoinder wherein the averments made by the Respondent, except those expressly admitted, have been denied. The Appellant has reiterated the facts, grounds and prayers contained in the Appeal and has made the following additional and clarificatory submissions:

At the outset, the Appellant submits that the central issue in the present Appeal is not merely the mathematical difference between the meter readings resulting in recorded consumption of 1333 units. The material question, according to the Appellant, is whether the Respondent has satisfactorily established that the extraordinary consumption of 1333 units recorded during the billing period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026 was genuine and correctly attributable to the Appellant's premises.

The Appellant submits that he does not seek substitution of actual meter readings by historical average consumption as a matter of routine billing. His contention is that the exceptional and isolated increase in consumption warranted proper technical scrutiny and explanation, particularly when the Respondent itself possesses the historical consumption record and the subsequent consumption substantially returned to the earlier range.

The Appellant does not dispute that the numerical difference between the meter readings resulted in the billed consumption of 1333 units. However, the Appellant disputes whether such exceptional consumption was correctly recorded and whether the Respondent has satisfactorily established the basis for treating the entire 1333 units as actual consumption during the disputed period.

In this regard, the Appellant has relied upon the consumption pattern reflected in the Respondent's own records, which shows consumption of 433 units in the preceding billing period, 1333 units during the disputed period, and thereafter 196 units and 137 units in the immediately succeeding periods. According to the Appellant, this sequence does not, by itself, conclusively establish that the meter was defective or inaccurate, but constitutes an objective and significant deviation which required a satisfactory explanation from the Respondent before the disputed demand could be upheld.

The Appellant has further submitted that the Respondent's reliance upon the connected-load assessment of 4.859 kW, conducted on 03.06.2026, does not by itself establish the actual consumption of 1333 units during the disputed billing period. Even assuming the connected load assessed on 03.06.2026 to be correct, such assessment establishes only the connected electrical load found at the premises on the date of inspection. It does not, by itself, establish the number of appliances actually operated during the disputed period, the duration for which they were operated, whether they operated simultaneously, or that their operation resulted in consumption of 1333 units during the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026.

The Appellant has also pointed out that the disputed billing period was from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026, whereas the connected-load inspection was carried out on 03.06.2026, i.e. several months after the disputed period and during summer. According to the Appellant, the Respondent has not demonstrated that the appliance mix, operating conditions and actual usage pattern observed during the June 2026 inspection were identical to those prevailing during the winter period in dispute. Consequently, the Appellant submits that the connected-load assessment made in June 2026 cannot, without supporting evidence, be treated as retrospective proof of actual consumption during the earlier billing period.

With regard to the load inspection report dated 03.06.2026, the Appellant has clarified that he does not dispute having subsequently received the inspection report. His objection is with regard to the basis and methodology adopted for arriving at the final connected-load figure of 4.859 kW. According to the Appellant, while the inspection report records the appliances/points and the resulting connected-load figure, the Respondent has not furnished the complete calculation sheet or the precise methodology, applicable commercial circulars, sales manual provisions, standing instructions or other authorised procedure pursuant to which the final figure of 4.859 kW was arrived at.

The Appellant has particularly raised an issue regarding the treatment of seasonal appliances, including air coolers and a geyser, recorded during the inspection. It is submitted that the mere presence of such appliances at the premises does not establish that they were operated continuously, simultaneously with all other appliances, or throughout the disputed winter billing period. The Appellant has therefore sought disclosure of the precise rule, commercial circular, standing instruction, sales manual provision or other authorised methodology under which such seasonal appliances were considered for the purpose of the connected-load assessment.

The Appellant has clarified that his submission regarding seasonal appliances is one of verification and not an assertion that any particular seasonal-load percentage or factor must necessarily be applied. His contention is that the Respondent should identify the rule actually relied upon and demonstrate, through the underlying calculation sheet, that the same was duly followed while arriving at the assessed load.

The Appellant has also sought clarification regarding the manner in which light points, power points/sockets and appliances were aggregated in arriving at the final connected-load figure. The Appellant has not alleged, as an established fact, that the Respondent deliberately double-counted any appliance or point. Rather, it is submitted that the item-wise calculation is necessary to ascertain whether, where an appliance has already been included at its rated wattage, the associated power point/socket was additionally assigned a separate wattage, and how light points and other points were treated in the calculation.

The Appellant accordingly submits that the Respondent ought to disclose the item-wise calculation and the exact authorised methodology adopted for assessing the connected load of 4.859 kW, including the treatment of appliances, light points, power points/sockets and any diversity, usage or seasonal factors applied. According to the Appellant, a final figure without its underlying calculation is not capable of effective technical scrutiny or verification.

The Appellant has further submitted that historical as well as subsequent consumption remains relevant material for assessing the disputed consumption. He does not seek average billing in substitution of actual meter readings. His contention is that the historical and subsequent consumption pattern is relevant evidence in determining whether an extraordinary disputed reading requires explanation and whether the Respondent has adequately established the basis of the disputed demand.

In this context, the Appellant has reiterated that the Respondent's own consumption record reflects 433 units immediately preceding the disputed consumption of 1333 units, followed by 196 units and 137 units. According to the Appellant, the Respondent has not identified any corresponding unusual event, additional appliance, prolonged operation or other factual circumstance which could satisfactorily explain the isolated increase followed by an immediate return to substantially lower consumption.

On the question of disclosure and fair opportunity, the Appellant has submitted that his grievance is not that he was absent during the inspection. Rather, his grievance is that the detailed methodology and underlying calculation necessary to examine and challenge the conclusion of 4.859 kW were not supplied before the adverse decision was rendered. The Appellant has stated that, after receipt of the order of the Learned CGRF, he specifically sought the connected-load assessment details, detailed calculation, proceedings and documents relied upon. Although the inspection report has subsequently been supplied, the underlying methodology and calculation remain material aspects requiring examination.

The Appellant has therefore requested that, in the event the Respondent relies upon any calculation sheet, circular, manual, standing instruction or technical document which has not previously been supplied to him, the same may be furnished to him and a reasonable opportunity may be afforded to him to respond thereto.

The Appellant has further submitted that the issue of connected load and the issue of actual consumption during the disputed billing period are distinct questions. According to the Appellant, even if it is found that the connected load at the premises exceeded the sanctioned load, such finding would constitute a separate regulatory issue and would not, by itself, establish that 1333 units were actually consumed during the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026.

The Appellant has also raised an issue concerning the billing chronology and service of the bill dated 15.03.2026. It is submitted that the disputed bill dated 15.03.2026 carried a due date of 27.03.2026 and, according to the Appellant, the said bill was not served upon him. The Appellant has further pointed out that the subsequent bill dated 24.03.2026 reflected the disputed amount as arrears even before expiry of the payment period specified in the earlier bill.

The Appellant has requested that the actual billing records be examined to determine whether the disputed amount was treated as arrears before expiry of the stipulated payment period and whether any surcharge or other consequence was imposed prematurely. According to the Appellant, this issue is independent of and separate from the substantive question regarding the correctness of the disputed 1333-unit consumption.

With regard to payment of the disputed amount, the Appellant has submitted that the disputed bill was paid under protest, solely to avoid coercive recovery and possible interruption of electricity supply. The Appellant maintains that such payment did not constitute an admission of liability or acceptance of the correctness of the disputed demand. He has accordingly sought appropriate adjustment/refund of any amount ultimately found to have been wrongly recovered.

In substance, the Appellant submits that the Respondent has relied primarily upon the meter reading and the subsequent connected-load assessment, but has not satisfactorily explained the exceptional increase to 1333 units during the disputed winter period and the subsequent reduction to 196 units and 137 units. The Appellant further submits that the later load assessment does not, without supporting evidence, establish the actual pattern of electricity usage during the earlier disputed period.

The Appellant has emphasised that connected load and actual energy consumption are different propositions. The presence of appliances capable of drawing a particular load does not establish that such appliances operated at their rated capacity for the duration necessary to result in consumption of 1333 units. According to the Appellant, actual energy consumption depends upon the nature of usage, duration of operation and operating conditions, and the Respondent's evidence should accordingly be examined on that basis.

The Appellant has therefore prayed that the Rejoinder be taken on record and that the Respondent's contention that the availability of connected load of 4.859 kW by itself establishes the correctness of the disputed consumption of 1333 units be rejected. He has further sought directions to the Respondent to produce the complete item-wise calculation sheet and the exact authorised methodology, rules or instructions relied upon for arriving at the connected load of 4.859 kW on 03.06.2026, including the treatment of seasonal appliances, light points, power points/sockets, appliance wattages and any diversity or usage factors applied.

The Appellant has also prayed that the Respondent be directed to identify and produce the applicable commercial circulars, sales manual provisions, standing instructions or other authorised methodology governing connected-load assessment, insofar as the same are relied upon; that the correctness of the connected-load assessment and its relevance to the disputed consumption be examined; and that the historical and subsequent consumption data be taken into consideration while determining whether the exceptional consumption of 1333 units has been satisfactorily established.

The Appellant has accordingly sought setting aside of the impugned order of the Learned CGRF insofar as it upholds the disputed bill without adequately establishing the basis for the exceptional consumption, and has prayed that the

Respondent be directed to revise/reassess the disputed bill if, upon examination of the complete record, the disputed consumption is found not to have been satisfactorily established. The Appellant has further sought adjustment/refund of any excess amount recovered pursuant to the disputed bill, which according to him was paid under protest, together with such consequential relief as may be permissible.

Finally, the Appellant has reserved the right to file a supplementary response, confined to any new calculation sheet, technical report, circular, manual, standing instruction or other material which may be produced by the Respondent and which was not previously supplied to him, so as to afford him a fair and reasonable opportunity to respond to such material.

E. Proceedings:

The matter was taken up for hearing through Video Conferencing.

The Appellant appeared in person and advanced his submissions. He submitted that he is the registered consumer of electricity connection bearing No. **307/3752/403705E**, having a sanctioned load of **1.220 kW** under the Domestic Supply (DS) category. Referring to the historical meter-reading chart, the Appellant submitted that his bi-monthly consumption had consistently remained below 600 units. However, during the billing period from **08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026**, consumption of **1333 units** was reflected against the said connection, which, according to him, was highly abnormal and inconsistent with his historical consumption pattern.

The Appellant further submitted that he had not received the bill pertaining to the aforesaid billing period and came to know of the disputed demand only upon receipt of the subsequent bill, wherein an amount of **Rs. 6,250/-** was reflected as arrears without adequate particulars or details regarding the basis of such demand.

The Respondent submitted that the disputed bill had been generated on the basis of the actual consumption recorded by the electricity meter installed at the premises. However, upon being specifically called upon to clarify the discrepancy in the meter readings and to substantiate the meter reading forming the basis of the disputed consumption, the Respondent was unable to furnish the requisite clarification during the course of hearing.

In view of the controversy regarding the correctness and chronology of the meter reading forming the basis of the disputed bill, the Respondent was directed to place on record the **system-downloaded meter-reading data for the relevant period, along with the MDI (Maximum Demand Indicator) record, if available**, so as to establish the meter readings and consumption recorded during the disputed billing period. The Respondent was directed to file the aforesaid documents on or before **11.08.2026**, with an advance copy to the Appellant.

In compliance with the aforesaid directions, the Respondent filed its reply along with the relevant annexures, including the **MDI record and meter-reading data**, which were taken on record.

The matter was thereafter taken up for further hearing on **12.08.2026**. During the course of hearing, the Respondent submitted that the meter-reading record disclosed a discrete spike in consumption during the disputed period, with the reading corresponding to consumption of **1333 units being recorded on 11.02.2026**. The Respondent further placed reliance upon the MDI data, which reflected **3.08 kW for December 2025, 3.98 kW for January 2026 and 2.54 kW for February 2026**. However, upon being specifically asked to explain the circumstances resulting in the isolated increase in consumption during the disputed billing period, particularly in the context of the historical consumption pattern before and after the disputed period, no satisfactory explanation could be furnished by the Respondent.

It was also noted during the course of hearing that, as reflected from the consumption record placed on file, the consumption immediately preceding the disputed period and that in the subsequent billing cycles remained substantially lower, whereas the consumption of **1333 units during the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026 constituted a distinct and isolated increase**.

The matter was accordingly heard on the basis of the pleadings, documents and material placed on record by the parties.

F. Issues for Determination

1. Whether the Respondent has established that the disputed electricity bill dated 15.03.2026, reflecting consumption of 1333 units during the billing period 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026, was correctly raised on the basis of actual meter readings and in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions?

2. Whether the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum was justified in relying upon the check meter verification and connected load assessment while upholding the disputed bill, and whether the Appellant's reliance on historical consumption pattern is sufficient to discredit the recorded meter consumption?
3. Whether the proceedings before the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum suffered from violation of the principles of natural justice on account of the alleged non-supply of documents and inadequate consideration of the Appellant's objections relating to billing, inspection and assessment?
4. Whether the impugned Final Order dated 17.06.2026 passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum calls for interference by this Authority in exercise of its appellate jurisdiction under Section 42(6) of the Electricity Act, 2003?

G. Findings and Analysis

I have carefully considered the pleadings and submissions of the Appellant and the Respondent, the impugned Final Order dated 16.06.2026 passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh (hereinafter referred to as the "Learned CGRF"), the documents placed on record by the parties, including the system-downloaded meter-reading data, MDI record and photographic evidence, the submissions advanced during the course of hearing, and the applicable provisions of the Electricity Act, 2003 and the JERC (Electricity Supply Code) Regulations, 2018.

The principal controversy in the present Appeal relates to the electricity bill dated 15.03.2026 raised for the billing period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026, reflecting consumption of 1333 units and a consequential demand of Rs. 6,250/-. The Appellant has primarily challenged the said demand on the ground that the consumption of 1333 units is substantially inconsistent with his historical consumption pattern and that the Respondent has failed to satisfactorily establish the correctness of the meter reading forming the basis of the disputed bill.

At the outset, it is necessary to observe that mere deviation from the historical consumption pattern cannot, by itself, invalidate an otherwise duly recorded meter reading. Ordinarily, a distribution licensee is required to raise a bill on the basis of actual energy recorded by the installed meter and not merely on the basis of historical average consumption. Therefore, the fact that the consumption during a particular billing period is higher than the previous consumption does not, by itself, constitute sufficient ground for setting aside the bill.

At the same time, where an exceptionally high and isolated consumption is questioned by the consumer and the material relied upon by the licensee for establishing the opening and closing readings contains an internal discrepancy, the correctness of the disputed consumption necessarily requires examination on the basis of the evidence available on record.

Functioning of the meter

In the present case, it is significant that nowhere during the proceedings has the Appellant alleged that the electricity meter itself was defective, inaccurate or malfunctioning. The controversy raised by the Appellant is not with regard to the functioning of the meter as such, but with regard to the correctness and chronological attribution of the meter readings forming the basis of the disputed bill.

The record shows that a check meter was installed at the premises from 12.05.2026 to 20.05.2026 pursuant to the directions of the Learned CGRF for verification of the existing meter. The Respondent has relied upon the outcome of the said exercise to contend that the installed meter was recording consumption correctly.

However, the said verification was undertaken several months after the commencement of the disputed billing period. It may establish the functioning of the meter during the period in which the check-meter exercise was undertaken, but it cannot retrospectively establish that a particular reading was correctly recorded on 08.12.2025, nor can it by itself establish that exactly 1333 units were consumed between 08.12.2025 and 11.02.2026.

Thus, there is no finding in the present case that the meter was defective or inaccurate. The question is narrower, namely, whether the particular meter readings relied upon for raising the disputed bill have been satisfactorily established with reference to their respective dates.

Discrepancy regarding the reading of 644 kWh

The Respondent has relied upon the meter readings of 644 kWh as on 08.12.2025 and 1977 kWh as on 11.02.2026 to justify the consumption of 1333 units during the disputed billing period.

Pursuant to the directions issued during the hearing on 10.08.2026, the Respondent placed on record the system-downloaded meter-reading data. The said record reflects the meter reading as 644 kWh on 08.12.2025 and 1977 kWh on 11.02.2026.

The Respondent has also placed on record photographic evidence relating to the meter reading of 644 kWh. However, the photograph itself bears the date and time of capture as 15.12.2025 at 11:22:18 AM.

Thus, there are two pieces of evidence emanating from the Respondent's own record which do not stand satisfactorily reconciled. The system-downloaded meter-reading chart attributes the reading of 644 kWh to 08.12.2025, whereas the photographic evidence produced by the Respondent establishes that the photograph showing the meter displaying 644 kWh was captured on 15.12.2025 at 11:22:18 AM.

This discrepancy is not merely technical or inconsequential. The reading of 644 kWh constitutes the opening reading on which the entire disputed consumption of 1333 units has been calculated, namely:

1977 kWh − 644 kWh = 1333 kWh.

Consequently, the date on which the opening reading of 644 kWh was actually recorded assumes direct significance in determining whether the consumption of 1333 units can safely be attributed to the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026.

The photograph can establish, at the highest, that the meter displayed 644 kWh on 15.12.2025 at 11:22:18 AM. It does not, by itself, establish that the meter displayed the same reading on 08.12.2025. Conversely, while the system-downloaded chart attributes the reading to 08.12.2025, the Respondent has not produced material satisfactorily explaining why the contemporaneous photograph showing the same reading bears a date seven days later.

The Respondent was afforded an opportunity to explain and reconcile the aforesaid discrepancy. However, no satisfactory explanation has emerged from the material placed on record. In these circumstances, this Authority is unable to conclusively accept that 644 kWh was the actual meter reading prevailing on 08.12.2025 merely on the basis of the system-downloaded chart, particularly when the photographic evidence produced by the Respondent itself places the same reading on 15.12.2025.

MDI data

The MDI data produced by the Respondent reflects 3.08 kW for December 2025, 3.98 kW for January 2026 and 2.54 kW for February 2026.

The said data establishes that there was electrical demand recorded during the relevant months. However, MDI data, by itself, does not establish the total energy consumption attributable to the disputed billing period, nor does it resolve the specific discrepancy regarding the date on which the meter reading of 644 kWh was recorded.

The MDI figures therefore cannot substitute for the requirement of establishing the opening and closing energy meter readings with their respective dates. They may constitute supporting technical material, but they do not reconcile the inconsistency between the system-generated date of 08.12.2025 and the photographic date of 15.12.2025.

Historical consumption

The historical consumption pattern from the records is reproduced hereunder:

Month & Year	Reading from	Reading to	Previous reading	Current Reading	Consumption
Nov-25	25.08.25	08.10.25	1	211	210
Jan-26	08.10.25	08.12.25	211	644	433
Mar-26	08.12.25	11.02.26	644	1977	1333
May-26	11.02.26	11.03.26	1977	2173	196
May-26	11.03.26	06.04.26	2173	2310	137

The consumption history placed on record by the Respondent also requires consideration. The record shows consumption of 433 units during the preceding billing period, whereas the disputed period reflected consumption of 1333 units. Thereafter, the consumption substantially declined, with the billing cycle from 11.02.2026 to 11.03.2026 reflecting 196 units, followed by comparatively lower consumption thereafter.

Thus, the consumption of 1333 units constitutes an isolated and substantial spike when viewed against the immediately preceding and succeeding consumption pattern.

It is clarified that historical consumption cannot ordinarily be substituted for actual meter consumption merely because a particular bill is higher than previous bills. However, historical consumption assumes relevance as a corroborative circumstance where the underlying meter-reading record itself contains an unresolved chronological discrepancy.

In the present case, the historical consumption pattern does not, by itself, establish that the meter reading was incorrect. However, when considered together with the unresolved discrepancy concerning the date of the 644 kWh reading, it reinforces the conclusion that the disputed consumption of 1333 units cannot be accepted without qualification merely on the basis of the differential between 644 kWh and 1977 kWh.

Connected-load inspection

The Respondent has also relied upon the connected-load inspection conducted on 03.06.2026, wherein a connected load of 4.859 kW was found against the sanctioned load of 1.220 kW.

The said inspection is relevant to the extent that it establishes the electrical capacity available at the premises. However, connected load and actual energy consumption are two distinct concepts. The presence of appliances capable of drawing a particular load does not, by itself, establish the duration for which those appliances were operated, whether they operated simultaneously, or the actual energy consumed during the disputed billing period.

Further, the inspection was conducted on 03.06.2026, whereas the disputed billing period was from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026. The inspection, therefore, cannot retrospectively establish the actual usage pattern prevailing at the premises during the disputed period.

Accordingly, the connected load of 4.859 kW cannot be treated as conclusive proof that 1333 units were actually consumed during the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026. It is, at best, a circumstance showing that the premises possessed sufficient electrical capacity to consume such quantity of energy.

Assessment benchmark under Annexure-XIX

The Appellant has also drawn attention to Annexure-XIX of the JERC (Electricity Supply Code) Regulations, 2018, which prescribes the assessment formula $L \times D \times H \times F$ in the circumstances contemplated therein.

Applying the parameters relied upon by the Appellant, namely 5 kW load, 30 days, 8 hours per day and 40% factor applicable to domestic/residential premises, the indicative monthly consumption works out to:

$5 \times 30 \times 8 \times 40\% = 480$ units per month.

For the disputed billing period of approximately 65 days, this formula would correspond to an indicative consumption of approximately 1,040 units, subject, of course, to the applicability of the formula and the parameters prescribed under the Regulations.

This calculation is not being adopted as a substitute for actual meter consumption, nor is Annexure-XIX being invoked as the statutory basis for reassessment in the present case. Nevertheless, it provides a relevant corroborative benchmark. The indicative figure is materially below the disputed consumption of 1333 units and, when considered with the historical consumption pattern and the unresolved discrepancy in the opening meter reading, lends further support to the conclusion that the disputed consumption requires reassessment.

Appropriate basis for reassessment

The question then arises as to the appropriate basis on which the consumption should be reassessed.

The reading of 644 kWh as on 08.12.2025 cannot be safely adopted as the opening reading because of the unresolved discrepancy between the system-downloaded reading chart and the photographic evidence. At the same time, it would not be appropriate to replace actual meter consumption by an assumed historical average merely because the disputed consumption appears abnormal.

The record, however, contains two meter readings which provide more reliable and independently verifiable reference points. The meter reading of 211 kWh as on 01.11.2025 is undisputed. Similarly, the meter reading of 2173 kWh as on 11.03.2026 is reflected in the meter-reading record and is also corroborated by photographic evidence.

In these circumstances, taking the reading of 211 kWh as on 01.11.2025 and the reading of 2173 kWh as on 11.03.2026 as the two verifiable bookend readings would avoid placing reliance upon the disputed date attributed to the 644 kWh reading.

The difference between the two readings is:

2173 kWh − 211 kWh = 1962 kWh.

The said figure represents the recorded consumption between the two verifiable meter-reading points. It is not being held out as a finding that exactly 1962 units were consumed in any particular sub-period. Rather, it provides an objective basis for reassessing the billing for the period for which the opening and closing readings are satisfactorily established.

This approach also does not amount to substituting historical average consumption for actual meter consumption. On the contrary, it seeks to base the reassessment upon actual meter readings available on record, while avoiding reliance upon the disputed chronological attribution of the 644 kWh reading.

Conclusion

Upon an overall consideration of the material on record, this Authority finds that the Respondent has established that the meter was functioning and that the premises possessed sufficient connected load to consume substantial energy. However, the Respondent has not satisfactorily reconciled the material discrepancy between the system-downloaded meter-reading chart and the photographic evidence concerning the date of the 644KWh reading.

Since the said reading constitutes the opening reading for calculation of the disputed consumption of 1333 units, the discrepancy goes to the root of the basis upon which the impugned demand has been raised.

At the same time, this Authority makes it clear that there is no finding that the meter was defective, inaccurate or malfunctioning. The doubt is confined to the correctness and chronological attribution of the meter reading relied upon for billing.

The isolated spike of 1333 units, the substantially lower consumption immediately before and after the disputed period, the unresolved discrepancy concerning the date of the 644KWh reading, and the absence of any satisfactory explanation reconciling the two records, when considered cumulatively, make it unsafe to sustain the disputed demand solely on the basis of the differential of 644 kWh and 1977 kWh.

Accordingly, the ends of justice would be met by directing the Respondent Distribution Licensee to reassess the consumption for the period from 01.11.2025 to 11.03.2026, taking the meter reading of 211 kWh as on 01.11.2025 as the opening reading and 2173 kWh as on 11.03.2026 as the closing reading, and to raise/revise the bill strictly in accordance with the applicable tariff and billing provisions.

While undertaking such reassessment, the Respondent shall give full credit for all payments already made by the Appellant in respect of the electricity bills pertaining to the aforesaid period and adjust the same against the reassessed liability. Any late-payment surcharge, delayed payment charges or other consequential charges levied solely on account of the disputed demand shall also be recalculated consequentially and adjusted accordingly.

The impugned order of the Learned CGRF is, therefore, liable to be modified to the aforesaid extent. The remaining observations in the impugned order, insofar as they do not conflict with the directions contained herein, shall remain undisturbed.

DECISION

Having considered the pleadings and submissions of the parties, the impugned Final Order dated 16.06.2026 passed by the Learned Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum, Chandigarh in Complaint No. H-24/2026, the system-downloaded meter-reading data, MDI record, photographic evidence and other material placed on record, this Authority is of the considered view that the Respondent has not satisfactorily established the chronological correctness of the opening meter reading of 644 kWh as on 08.12.2025, which forms the basis for computation of the disputed consumption of 1333 units.

The photographic evidence produced by the Respondent itself shows the meter reading of 644 kWh on 15.12.2025 at 11:22:18 AM, whereas the system-downloaded meter-reading record attributes the same reading to 08.12.2025. The Respondent has not satisfactorily reconciled this discrepancy. Since the entire disputed consumption has been computed on the basis of the differential between 644 kWh and 1977 kWh, the discrepancy assumes material significance.

At the same time, this Authority finds no basis to hold that the electricity meter was defective, inaccurate or malfunctioning. The check-meter verification conducted from 12.05.2026 to 20.05.2026 and the other material on record do not establish any defect in the functioning of the meter. Similarly, the connected-load inspection dated 03.06.2026 cannot, by itself, establish actual consumption of 1333 units during the disputed billing period.

The historical consumption pattern, though not by itself sufficient to displace actual meter readings, constitutes a relevant corroborative circumstance in the peculiar facts of the present case, particularly when considered along with the unresolved discrepancy in the date of the 644 kWh reading and the isolated nature of the consumption spike.

In the circumstances, this Authority considers it just and proper to modify the impugned order to the limited extent of directing reassessment of the consumption on the basis of the verifiable meter reading of 211 kWh as on 01.11.2025 and the meter reading of 2173 kWh as on 11.03.2026, both of which are supported by the material available on record.

Accordingly, the Appeal is partly allowed to the aforesaid extent. The impugned Final Order dated 16.06.2026 is modified accordingly. The Respondent shall undertake the reassessment and consequential adjustment in terms of the directions contained in the Operative Order hereinbelow.

ORDER

In view of the foregoing discussion, findings and conclusions, the present Appeal No. 274 of 2026 is partly allowed, with the following directions:

1. The Respondent, Chandigarh Power Distribution Ltd. (CPDL), shall reassess the electricity consumption of the Appellant for the period from 01.11.2025 to 11.03.2026, by taking:
   - 211 kWh as on 01.11.2025 as the opening meter reading; and
   - 2173 kWh as on 11.03.2026 as the closing meter reading.
2. On the basis of the aforesaid readings, the Respondent shall determine the actual consumption for the said period and revise/recast the bills in accordance with the applicable tariff and the provisions of the JERC (Electricity Supply Code) Regulations, 2018.
3. While carrying out the reassessment, the Respondent shall give full credit and adjustment for all payments already made by the Appellant towards electricity bills relating to the aforesaid period and only the net amount, if any, remaining payable shall be recoverable from the Appellant.
4. Any late-payment surcharge, delayed payment charges or other consequential charges levied solely on account of the disputed demand of Rs. 6,250/- shall be recalculated consequentially on the basis of the reassessed liability. Any excess amount recovered from the Appellant, if so determined, shall be duly adjusted against future bills or refunded, as the case may be.
5. The demand of Rs. 6,250/- raised on the basis of consumption of 1333 units for the period from 08.12.2025 to 11.02.2026 shall not be enforced in its present form. The same shall stand substituted by the liability determined upon reassessment in terms of this Order.
6. The Respondent shall complete the aforesaid reassessment and give effect to the consequential billing adjustments within 30 days from the date of receipt of a copy of this Order and shall communicate the revised calculation/bill to the Appellant.
7. It is clarified that the present directions are issued on account of the unresolved discrepancy concerning the chronological recording of the meter reading forming the

basis of the disputed bill and shall not be construed as a finding that the installed electricity meter was defective, inaccurate or malfunctioning.

8. The Final Order dated 16.06.2026 passed by the Learned CGRF, Chandigarh in Complaint No. H-24/2026 is accordingly modified to the aforesaid extent. All other observations/findings contained therein, to the extent not inconsistent with the present Order, shall remain undisturbed.
9. The Respondent shall place on record a compliance report before this Authority after giving effect to the aforesaid directions.

The Appeal stands disposed of in the above terms. No order as to costs.

13/8/26
(C M Sharma)

Dated 13.08.2026 Ombudsman (JERC)