



## **Assam to waive 20% surcharge in power bills of tea gardens, BPL families**

**Assam: The CM's office said that a decision was taken for not imposing 20 per cent surcharge in the power bills of tea garden labourers and BPL consumers**

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Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said the state government has decided to waive the 20 per cent surcharge in power bills for tea garden labourers and all BPL consumers.

The chief minister, who reviewed the functioning of the Power Department, also said new electricity connections will be provided to nearly five lakh new customers at an expenditure of ₹1,719 crore sanctioned by the central government.

According to an official release by the Chief Minister's Office, a decision was taken at the meeting for "not imposing 20 per cent surcharge in the power bills of tea garden labourers and BPL consumers".

It was also decided that these economically backward consumers will be allowed to clear their pending power bills in 10 instalments.

"The chief minister said that ₹1,719 crore has been sanctioned by the Central government to Assam under Saubhagya Scheme and 4,80,249 new households would be provided power connection in the state with the amount," the statement said.

The Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana or the "Saubhagya" Scheme aims to provide electricity to all households. It also said that 48,557 Anganwadi centres and 13,321 lower primary schools will be provided power connection within December this year.

The power sector in Assam is divided into three government-controlled companies -- Assam Power Generation Corp Ltd (APGCL), Assam Electricity Grid Corp Ltd (AEGCL) and Assam Power Distribution Company Ltd (APDCL).

Sarma said steps will be taken by the Power Department to minimise revenue losses of nearly ₹102 crore every month due to power theft and transmission loss.

"The APDCL has performed well in revenue collection in the last few months. The revenue earned by the power company in July last year was ₹463.12 crore. This year, July collection is ₹735.16 crore, which is a considerable increase from the previous year," he added.

Sarma also said that power bills of all government offices will be paid under one financial head by the government to APDCL by the first of every month. The chief minister also said that the result of the examination held for filling up 1,600 posts in the APDCL will be declared soon.

*This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modifications to the text.*

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