

# Mirror investigation reveals how the power mafia is exploiting our need for cheaper electricity by stealing from the hubs and selling it for a pittance

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**MAXIMIZE  
MUMBAI**

**L**ike so many of the other essentials – water, land, food – electricity too has always been in short supply. Large parts of Mumbai are subjected to scheduled and routine power cuts, every year summers see unprecedented demand with limited supply, and consumer confidence is easily deflated with an electricity bill that is unaffordable.

Seen in this context, it comes as no surprise that a powerful and well-oiled mafia is operating in the city, selling illegal but affordable electricity to anyone who signs up for it.

A *Mirror* investigation over 20 days helped us understand how the power mafia operates, primarily in the slums and chawl areas. One of us went undercover in Andheri's Gaondevi region, as a job-seeker from the north of the country. We managed to convince a well-wisher

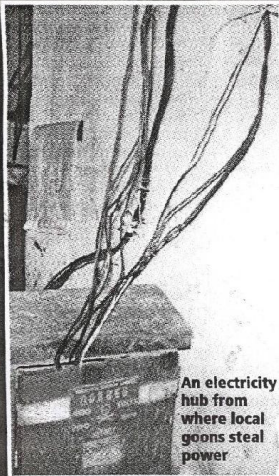
to let this reporter stay as his roommate in a chawl, as we went around acquainting ourselves with the ways of the power mafia. It was a risky affair,

as the reporter had to answer many questions and keep a low profile - the power mafia is indeed powerful with spies and informers lurking at every corner. After roaming the streets and back alleys for days and nights, we managed to win the confidence of a local political worker who agreed to take us to the inner sanctum – to give us a first-hand view of how the power mafia really works.

## THE MODUS OPERANDI

The mafia steals power from the main junction box or hub located in the neighbourhood by using 7/20 gauge wires and distributes it among those who want it. The system is quite similar to the way cable operators service their clients through interconnecting cables.

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**An electricity hub from where local goons steal power**

The success of any campaign depends on two-way interaction. In this case the Mumbai Mirror editorial team and you, the reader. Send in your suggestions and feedback to us at [maximizemumbai@indiatimes.com](mailto:maximizemumbai@indiatimes.com)