

I-T official awarded six months in jail for slapping ticket checker at CSMT

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AN ASSISTANT Commissioner of Income-Tax was sentenced to six months in jail and asked to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh by a court in Mumbai this week for slapping a ticket checker with his chappal when asked to pay a penalty for travelling without ticket in 2016. The court on Tuesday put on hold the punishment given to Rishikumar Singh to allow him to appeal the order.

"It needs to be noted that the accused is a public servant who was working as Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax at the time of alleged offence. He assaulted the informant by footwear when he was discharging his duty as a ticket checker at railway station. "Considering the increase in the incidents of assault on public servants and peculiar manner of assault on the informant, I find sentence of imprisonment as well as fine is necessary to be awarded," additional sessions judge S D Tawshikar said in his order.

Singh in his defence had

claimed that the TC was not wearing the coat or blazer, which is the designated full uniform. Hence, he could not have been said to be on public duty. The TC had told the court that he was wearing a white shirt and his identity card was worn around his neck.

The court said that Singh's argument was "too technical" and cannot be accepted. It said the railway's rules of conduct were "administrative instructions" and it did not change the fact that the TC was performing his duty as a public servant.

"Even if informant was not in full uniform of TC, his act of mere demanding ticket itself is sufficient to give an indication to others that he is a Ticket Checker. Even if the informant was not in uniform, still the accused had no right and authority to assault him and that too in public view," the court said.

Singh had also claimed that he was falsely implicated as the TC had demanded a bribe and he refused to pay it. The court said these claims were 'completely vague, baseless and an afterthought'.

Singh was facing charges for slapping a senior ticket inspec-

tor on October 8, 2016 at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus. According to the submissions made by prosecutor Ajit Chavan, the TC was on duty on the day, checking tickets on platform 14/15. Around 7.15pm, he saw one person hurriedly pass him. The TC asked him to show his ticket to which the man said he did not have. The TC then asked him to pay fine.

The man, later identified to be Singh, then told the TC, "Main Income Tax commissioner hu. Mujhe ticket ki zarurat nahi. Tum kaun ho ticket poochne wale (I am an income tax commissioner, I don't need to take ticket, who are you to ask me about it)." The TC told the court that Singh then tried to flee and in his attempt, removed his chappal and hit his cheek with it. He also caught the TC's collar. The TC told the court that in the scuffle, his uniform got damaged and his wristwatch fell and was lost.

The TC, meanwhile, alerted other TCs who reached there. Singh was taken to the CSMT railway police, and an FIR was filed.

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