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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Court Orders Russian Post to Pay for Mail Eaten by Rats

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After a sumptuously priced cosmetics delivery was devoured by rats, Russian Post was ordered to pay out 20,000 rubles ($560) in damages.

The rodents gorged on a shipment of Israeli beauty products valued at 10,000 rubles ($280), a Chelyabinsk court revealed in a statement.

The recipient was made to wait eagerly for several months before being informed the delivery had fallen prey to pests.

The local post office refused to pay up for the rat snack, maintaining that only a sender is entitled to compensation.

But the recipient, whose name was withheld from a court statement, successfully sued,

winning back twice the amount she initially paid for the ill-fated goods. The ruling was handed down last week, but only made headlines on Tuesday.

Russian Post has developed a solid reputation for inefficiency: In 2012, it was rated among the world's worst, along with Angola and Honduras, in a ranking of 159 countries' postal services.

The state monopoly has launched efforts to improve in recent years, but relapses abound. Last week, for example, a parcel reportedly spent six months en route from Moscow to the northern Komi Republic via Russian Post's express delivery service. A delivery man could have carried the package to its destination on foot within the same period, Znak.com said at the time.

Russian Post also has a track record of botched shipments. Last year, a client in Rostov-on-Don filed suit after his new iPhone 5 was swapped out with a couple of stones in transit.

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