

'All for drugs'

12 months for 2 caught stealing WASA pipes valued at \$12,000

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TWO confessed drug addicts who stole pipes belonging to the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) valued at \$12,000 will keep each other's company in jail for next 12 months.

Andre Rooplal, 31, and Naresh Daniel, 32, on Friday pleaded guilty to larceny of the pipes belonging to the State.

Around midday last Wednesday while Constable Desiree Maxima was on duty at Lady Hailes Avenue, San Fernando, she saw three men using a cutting torch on the pipe line.

"Both men (Rooplal and Daniel) were holding on to that said line, the property of WASA," police prosecutor Sgt Russell Ramoutar said in the San Fernando Magistrates Court.

Maxima spoke to the men, who said they had not been given permission to cut the lines.

She arrested Rooplal, of Embacadere, San Fernando, and Daniel of no fixed place of abode.

A third man escaped.

Both men confessed to being drug addicts. Rooplal, who had 16 convictions over the last ten years for possession of drugs and housebreaking and larceny, said it was "all for drugs".

"Just to get drugs to smoke...I end up stealing things from people."

Daniel had six previous convictions.

Both begged to be sent to a rehabilitation centre, with Rooplal asking to be spared a prison term as he could "get drugs in jail".

But Magistrate Alicia Chankar told them they would have had several chances to change in the past.

"I don't know how much drugs you were planning to buy. You stole \$12,000 in steel pipe. You can't continue breaking the law. What you did was wrong," Chankar said.

She sentenced each to a year in jail with hard labour.