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The Post Office Act, 2023

(ACT NO. 43 OF 2023)

[*As on the 6th October,* 2025]

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

G.S.R.	*for*	General Statutory Rules.
S.O.	,,	Statutory Order.
Notifn.	,,	Notification.

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THE POST OFFICE ACT, 2023

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

SECTIONS

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THE POST OFFICE ACT, 2023

ACT NO. 43 OF 2023

[24*th December*, 2023.]

An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to Post Office in India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-fourth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. Short title, extent and commencement.— (*1*) This Act may be called the Post Office Act, 2023.

(*2*) It shall come into force on such date[1] as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.— In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(*a*) "Director General" means the Director General of Postal Services appointed by the Central Government and includes any officer authorised by the Central Government to perform the duties of the Director General;

(*b*) "item" means an indivisible article which the Post Office accepts for providing a service;

(*c*) "notification" means a notification published in the Official Gazette;

(*d*) "Post Office" means the Department of Posts and includes every house, building, room, place or any other asset used by the Post Office for providing any service;

(*e*) "prescribe" means prescribe by rules made under this Act and the expression "prescribed" shall be construed accordingly;

(*f*) "regulations" means the regulations made under this Act

3. Services to be provided by Post Office.—(*1*) The Post Office shall provide such services as the Central Government may prescribe.

(*2*) The Director General may make regulations—

(*a*) in respect of activities necessary to provide services referred to in sub-section (*1*); and

(*b*) to fix charges for, and the terms and conditions in respect of, services referred to in sub-section (*1*).

(*3*) Any service provided by the Post Office shall be subject to any other law for the time being in force.

4. Exclusive privilege in respect of postage stamps.— (*1*) The Post Office shall have the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps.

(*2*) The Director General may make regulations relating to the supply and sale of postage stamps and postal stationery.

(*3*) In this section, the expressions—

(*a*) "postage stamp" means any stamp provided by the Central Government, in any form, physical or digital, for denoting sums payable in respect of such service provided by the Post Office, as may be prescribed and includes stamps affixed, printed, embossed, embedded, impressed, or otherwise indicated on an item;

(*b*) "postal stationery" means stationery, issued by the Post Office such as envelopes, letter cards, postcards, bearing imprinted stamps or inscriptions indicating that sum payable in respect of a service provided by the Post Office has been prepaid.

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1. 18th June, 2024, *vide* notification No. S.O. 2352(*E*), dated, 17th day of June, 2024, *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, sec. 3(*ii*).

5. Addresses and postcodes.— (*1*) The Central Government may prescribe standards for addressing on the items, address identifiers and usage of postcodes.

(*2*) In this section, "postcode" means a series of digits, letters or digital code or a combination of digits, letters or digital code used to identify a geographic area or location, and ease the process of sorting and delivery of items and for other purposes.

6. Power to give effect to arrangements with other countries.—The Central Government may make rules to give effect to arrangements made with any foreign country or territory for services provided by the Post Office between India and the said foreign country or territory.

7. Recovery of sums due in respect of services provided by Post Office.—(*1*) Every person who avails a service provided by the Post Office shall be liable to pay the charges in respect of such service.

(*2*) If any person refuses or neglects to pay the charges referred to in sub-section (*1*), such amount shall be recoverable as if it were an arrear of land revenue due from him.

8. Official mark to be evidence of certain facts denoted.—The Central Government may prescribe the conditions for denoting the official marks on items to be used as *prima facie* evidence of the facts so denoted.

9. Power to intercept, open or detain any item or deliver item to customs authority.—(*1*) The Central Government may, by notification, empower any officer to cause any item in course of transmission by the Post Office to be intercepted, opened or detained in the interest of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergency, or public safety or upon the occurrence of any contravention of any of the provisions of this Act or any other law for the time being in force.

(*2*) The Central Government may cause any item referred to in sub-section (*1*) to be disposed of in such manner as it deems appropriate.

(*3*) The Central Government may, by notification, empower any officer of the Post Office to deliver an item, received from within or beyond the limits of India and reckoned to contain anything liable to duty or which is suspected to contain any prohibited item to such customs authority or any other authority as may be specified in the said notification, and such customs authority or any other authority shall deal with such item in accordance with the provisions of any law for the time being in force.

10. Exemption from liability.—(*1*) Notwithstanding anything in any other law for the time being in force, the Post Office shall not incur any liability except such liability as may be prescribed with regard to a service provided by the Post Office.

(*2*) No officer of the Post Office shall incur any liability with regard to a service provided by the Post Office, unless the officer has acted fraudulently or wilfully caused loss, delay or mis-delivery of service.

11. Delegation of power, other than rulemaking powers to Director General.—The Central Government may, by notification, authorise, either absolutely or subject to conditions, the Director General to exercise any of the powers conferred upon the Central Government by this Act, other than the power to make rules.

12. Power to make rules.—The Central Government may, by notification, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

13. Power to make regulations.— The Director General may, with the prior approval of the Central Government, by notification, make regulations for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

14. Laying of rules and regulations in Parliament.— Every rule or regulation made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or regulation or both Houses agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, the rule or regulation shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or

annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule or regulation.

15. Power to remove difficulties.—(*1*) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no order shall be made under this section after the expiry of two years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(*2*) Every order made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament.

16. Repeal and savings.—(*1*) The Indian Post Office Act, 1898 (6 of 1898) is hereby repealed.

(*2*) Notwithstanding the repeal of the Act by sub-section (*1*), all rules, notifications and orders, made or purported to have been made under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 (6 of 1898), shall, in so far as they relate to matters for which provision is made in this Act and are not inconsistent therewith, be deemed to have been made under this Act and shall continue in force unless and until they are superseded by any rules or notification or order made under this Act.

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STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Indian Post Office Act, 1898 was enacted in 1898 with a view to govern the functioning of the Post Office in India. This Act primarily addresses mail services provided through the Post Office. Over the years, services available through the Post Office have diversified beyond mails and the Post Office network has become a vehicle for delivery of a variety of citizen centric services which necessitated the repeal of the said Act and enactment of new law in its place. Accordingly, it is proposed to bring the Post Office Bill, 2023 which addresses these changes and provides for a simple legislative framework to facilitate evolution of the post office into a network for delivery of citizen centric services.

2. The Post Office Bill, 2023 seeks to repeal the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 and to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Post Office in India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

3. The Bill, inter alia, seeks to provide that—

(*a*) the Post Office shall provide such services as the Central Government may by rules prescribe;

(*b*) the Director General of Postal Services shall make regulations in respect of activities necessary to provide those services and fix the charges for such services;

(*c*) the Post Office shall have the exclusive privilege of issuing postage stamps;

(*d*) the Central Government shall have power to give effect to the arrangements made with any foreign country or territory;

(*e*) every person shall be liable to pay charges for availing any service provided by the Post Office and if such person refuses or neglects to pay any charge due to him it shall be recoverable as land revenue;

(*f*) the Central Government may prescribe the conditions for denoting the official mark on postal item to be used as prima facie evidence of the fact so denoted;

(*g*) the Central Government may, by notification, empower any officer to intercept, open or detain any item in the interest of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergency, or public safety or upon the occurrence of any contravention of any of the provisions of any law for the time being in force;

(*h*) the Post Office and officers of the Post Office shall be exempted from any liability by reason of any loss, mis-delivery, delay, or damage in course of any service provided by the Post Office except such liability as may be prescribed.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objectives.

ASHWINI VAISHNAW.

NEW DELHI;
The 8*th August*, 2023.

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