

L-16022/14/2025-GP-I (E:57472)
Government of India
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

Kartavya Bhawan-3, New Delhi
Dated: 19th October, 2026

NOTICE

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas invites comments and suggestions from stakeholders and members of the public on the Draft Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026, framed under the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962 (50 of 1962), as amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026.

2. Section 15A of the said Act provides for the appointment of an adjudicating officer, not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India, for holding an inquiry and imposing penalties in respect of a first contravention covered under section 15(1)(a) of the Act. The proposed Rules seek to prescribe the manner of holding such inquiry and imposing penalties, with a view to ensuring transparency, procedural uniformity and adherence to the principles of natural justice.

3. The Draft Rules are being uploaded on the Ministry's website for public consultation. Comments and suggestions on the Draft Rules are invited from all stakeholders within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this Notice. The comments received within the stipulated period will be examined by the Ministry before finalisation of the Rules.

4. The comments/suggestions/feedbacks may be sent by e-mail to the following IDs: sogp2.png@nic.in and robin.82@nic.in.

5. The last date for receipt of the comments/suggestions/feedback is 20.11.2026.


(L. Robin)

Under Secretary to the Government of India
Tel No. 24011132

Encl.: Draft Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the _____, 2026

G.S.R.(E).— In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 17 read with sub-section (1) of section 15A of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962 (50 of 1962), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:—

1. Short title and commencement.—

- (1) These rules may be called the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026.
- (2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions.—

- (1) In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,—
 - (a) “Act” means the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962 (50 of 1962);
 - (b) “adjudicating officer” means an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India appointed by the Central Government under sub-section (1) of section 15A of the Act;
 - (c) “Appellate Tribunal” means the Appellate Tribunal referred to in section 30 of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 (19 of 2006) as specified in section 15B of the Act;
 - (d) “competent authority” shall have the meaning assigned to it in clause (a) of section 2 of the Act;
 - (e) “complaint” means a complaint in writing made to the adjudicating officer alleging a first contravention under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act;
 - (f) “corporation” shall have the meaning assigned to it in clause (b) of section 2 of the Act;

(g) “person concerned” means any person against whom a complaint is made alleging a first contravention under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of _____ the _____ Act.

(h) “Section” means a section of the Act.

(2) Words and expressions used herein and not defined, but defined in the Act, shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the Act.

3. Continuity of proceedings.—In case the officer appointed as the adjudicating officer ceases to hold office for any reason whatsoever, the proceedings shall continue from the same stage before the newly appointed adjudicating officer.

4. Service of notices and orders.—Any notice, direction, or order issued under these rules may be served upon the person concerned by any of the following modes, namely:—

(a) by delivering or tendering it directly to the person concerned or to a duly authorised representative;

(b) by registered post with acknowledgment due or speed post addressed to the last known place of residence, business, or office of the person concerned; or

(c) by sending it to the verified electronic mail address last notified by the person concerned to the adjudicating officer or, as the case may be, ordinarily used by the person concerned for official or business communication; or

(d) by affixing a copy thereof at the last known place of residence or business of the person concerned, where service by any of the modes specified in clauses (a) to (c) is not reasonably practicable.

5. Procedure for holding inquiry and adjudication of penalties.—

(1) A complaint alleging a first contravention under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act may be preferred in writing to the adjudicating officer by—

(a) the Central Government or a State Government;

(b) the competent authority;

(c) the corporation proposing to lay, laying, or maintaining the pipeline; or

(d) any other person aggrieved by, or having personal knowledge of, the alleged contravention.

(2) Every complaint filed under sub-rule (1) shall set out:—

(a) the specific facts constituting the alleged contravention under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act, stating whether the person concerned _____ has _____ -

(i) wilfully obstructed any person in doing any of the acts authorised by section 4, section 7, or section 8 of the Act;

(ii) wilfully filled up, destroyed, damaged, or displaced any trench or mark made under section 4 of the Act; or

(iii) wilfully done any act prohibited under section 9 of the Act;

(b) the name, address, and available particulars of the person or persons alleged to have committed the contravention; and

(c) the documents, inspection records, site reports, or other material relied upon in support of the allegations.

(3) Upon receipt of a complaint from a person other than the Central Government, a State Government, a competent authority, or a corporation, the adjudicating officer shall undertake a preliminary examination of the complaint within a period of forty-five days from the date of its receipt, solely for the purpose of determining whether there are sufficient grounds to proceed with the matter.

(4) Where, upon preliminary examination under sub-rule (3), the adjudicating officer is satisfied that there are sufficient grounds for proceeding, or where the complaint is preferred by the Central Government, a State Government, a competent authority, or a corporation, the adjudicating officer shall issue a show-cause notice to the person concerned.

(5) Where, upon preliminary examination under sub-rule (3), the adjudicating officer is satisfied that there are insufficient grounds for proceeding, the adjudicating officer shall pass a reasoned order declining to initiate proceedings and communicate the same to the complainant: Provided that an order passed under this sub-rule shall not operate as an adjudication on the merits of the case and shall not preclude the consideration of any fresh complaint based on material subsequently coming to light.

(6) Every show-cause notice issued under sub-rule (4) shall -

(a) state the specific allegations constituting the contravention under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act;

(b) be accompanied by a copy of the complaint and the documents relied upon; and

(c) require the person concerned to show cause in writing, within a period of sixty days from the date of receipt of the notice, as to why penalty should not be imposed under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act.

(7) The person concerned shall submit a written explanation within the period specified in clause (c) of sub-rule (6), setting out:—

(a) a statement of relevant facts;

(b) specific responses and justifications in respect of each allegation contained in the show-cause notice;

(c) specific admissions or denials of the facts alleged; and

(d) copies of documents, if any, relied upon in defense:

Provided that where any document is not in the possession or custody of the person concerned, the explanation shall disclose, so far as known, the identity of the person in whose possession or custody the document is believed to be.

(8) The person concerned may, before the expiry of the period specified in clause (c) of sub-rule (6), apply in writing to the adjudicating officer for extension of time, and the adjudicating officer may, on being satisfied that there is sufficient cause, extend the said period by a further period not exceeding thirty days, for reasons to be recorded in writing.

(9) The adjudicating officer shall afford the person concerned a reasonable opportunity of being heard within thirty days of receipt of the written explanation.

(10) During the hearing, the person concerned may make oral submissions either in person or through a duly authorised representative, and may submit written arguments along with supporting material.

(11) If the person concerned fails to appear on the date fixed for hearing, the adjudicating officer may issue a reminder notice giving a further opportunity to appear within fifteen days of receipt of such reminder, failing which the adjudicating officer may proceed to decide the matter *ex parte* on the basis of the material available on record.

(12) Where the adjudicating officer, after the conclusion of the hearing, considers it necessary to give the complainant an opportunity to submit a response on any new issue or submission raised by the person concerned, a

copy of such response shall be furnished to the person concerned, who shall be given a reasonable opportunity to submit a rejoinder before the matter is decided.

(13) The adjudicating officer may, if considered necessary for the proper conduct of the inquiry, seek the technical opinion or assistance of experts in engineering, land records, or surveying:

Provided that a copy of any such opinion or report shall be furnished to the parties, who shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to submit their comments thereon before the same is relied upon by the adjudicating officer.

(14) Where any party fails or refuses to comply with any procedural direction or notice lawfully issued under these rules, the adjudicating officer may draw such adverse inference as may be justified in the circumstances of the case.

(15) A complete and authentic record of all proceedings held before the adjudicating officer shall be maintained.

(16) The adjudicating officer shall, before imposing any penalty under these rules, record a clear finding that the contravention committed is a first contravention falling strictly within clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act.

(17) The adjudicating officer shall, as far as practicable, pass a reasoned order within a period of one year from the date of receipt of the complaint, after taking into consideration the submissions of the parties and the record of the inquiry, and determine the quantum of penalty, if any, to be imposed in accordance with clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Act:

Provided that where the adjudicating officer, for reasons beyond his control, is unable to pass the order within the said period, he may, after recording reasons in writing, extend the said period by such further period, not exceeding six months, as may be necessary; and further, that in determining the quantum of penalty, the adjudicating officer shall have regard to the nature and gravity of the contravention, any injury or damage caused, the disproportionate gain or unfair advantage, if any, made as a result thereof, and any other relevant factor.

(18) An appeal against an order of the adjudicating officer under section 15A of the Act shall lie before the Appellate Tribunal in accordance with section 15B of the Act.

6. Deposit of penalty.—

The penalty imposed by the adjudicating officer shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India by the person concerned in such manner and through such mode of payment as may be specified in the order, within forty-five days from the date of receipt of the order or within such extended period as the adjudicating officer may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, allow, subject to any order passed by the Appellate Tribunal:

Provided that where the penalty is not deposited within the period specified in the order or within such extended period, the amount shall be recoverable as an arrear of land revenue, without prejudice to any other mode of recovery available under law.

7. Rectification of errors.—The adjudicating officer may, at any time within thirty days from the date of the order, either on his own motion or on an application made by any party, rectify any clerical or arithmetical mistake or any error apparent on the face of the record, after giving the parties a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

8. Maintenance of register.—The adjudicating officer shall maintain, in such form as the Central Government may specify, a register containing particulars of every complaint received, the show-cause notices issued, the orders passed, and the penalties imposed and recovered under these rules.