

# THE INDIAN POST OFFICE ACT, 1898<sup>1</sup>

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[*Omitted.*].

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- 49. [*Omitted.*].
- 50. [*Omitted.*].
- 51. [*Omitted.*].
- 52. [*Omitted.*].
- 53. [*Omitted.*].
- 54. [*Omitted.*].
- 55. [*Omitted.*].
- 56. [*Omitted.*].
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[*Omitted.*].

- 58. [*Omitted.*].
- 59. [*Omitted.*].
- 60. [*Omitted.*].
- 61. [*Omitted.*].
- 62. [*Omitted.*].
- 63. [*Omitted.*].
- 64. [*Omitted.*].
- 65. [*Omitted.*].
- 66. [*Omitted.*].
- 67. [*Omitted.*].
- 68. [*Omitted.*].
- 69. [*Omitted.*].

[*Omitted.*].

- 70. [*Omitted.*].
- 71. [*Omitted.*].
- 72. [*Omitted.*].

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# THE INDIAN POST OFFICE ACT, 1898

ACT NO. 6 OF 1898<sup>1</sup>

[22nd March, 1898.]

An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Post Offices in India.

WHEREAS it is expedient to consolidate and amend the law relating to the Post Offices in India; It is hereby enacted as follows:—

## CHAPTER I

### PRELIMINARY

**1. Short title, extent, application and commencement.**—(1) This Act may be called the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

<sup>2</sup>[(2) It extends to the whole of India <sup>3</sup>\*\*\* and it applies also to all citizens of India outside India.]

(3) It shall come into force on the first day of July, 1898.

**2. Definitions.**—In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,—

(a) the expression “Director General” means the Director General of <sup>4</sup>[Posts and Telegraphs];

(b) the expression “inland”, used in relation to a postal article, means—

(i) posted in <sup>5</sup>[India] and addressed to any place in <sup>5</sup>[India] or to any place for which a post office is established by the <sup>6</sup>[Central Government <sup>7</sup>\*\*\*] beyond the limits of <sup>5</sup>[India]; or

(ii) posted at any post office established by the <sup>6</sup>[Central Government <sup>7</sup>\*\*\*] beyond the limits of <sup>5</sup>[India] and addressed to any place for which any such post office is established or to any place in <sup>5</sup>[India]:

<sup>8</sup>[Provided that the expression “inland” shall not apply to any class of postal articles which may be specified in this behalf by the Central Government by notification in the Official Gazette, when posted in or at or addressed to any places of post offices which may be described in such notification;]

(c) the expression “mail bag” includes a bag, box, parcel or any other envelope or covering in which postal articles in course of transmission by post are conveyed, whether it does or does not contain any such article;

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1. Amended in its application to—

(1) the excluded and partially excluded areas in Assam by Assam Regulations 2 of 1941 and 1 of 1942 respectively;

(2) the partially excluded areas in Bihar by Bihar Regulation 3 of 1942;

(3) the partially excluded areas in C.P. and Berar by C.P. and Berar Regulation 1 of 1942;

(4) the partially excluded areas in Orissa by Orissa Regulation 1 of 1942;

(5) the partially excluded areas in U.P. Regulation 2 of 1942; and

(6) the Darjeeling District by Bengal Regulation 7 of 1942.

The Act has been extended to—

(1) Goa, Daman and Diu (w.e.f. 1-9-1962): vide Notification No. S.O. 2735, dated the 1st September, 1962, see Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Pt. II, sec. 3 (ii), pp. 1991-92.

(2) Dadra and Nagar Haveli (w.e.f. 1-7-1965) by Reg. 6 of 1963, s. 2 and the First Schedule.

(3) Lakshadweep (w.e.f. 1-10-1967): vide Reg. 8 of 1965, s. 3 and the First Schedule.

2. Subs. by the A.O. 1950.

3. The words “except Part B States” omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule.

4. Subs. by Act 14 of 1914, s. 3, for “the Post Office of India”.

5. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

6. Subs. by the A.O. 1937, for “the G.G. in C.”.

7. The words “or the Crown Representative” omitted by the A.O. 1948.

8. Ins. by Act 2 of 1903, s. 2.

(d) the expression “mail ship” means a ship employed for carrying mails, pursuant to contract or continuing arrangement, by the Central Government or Her Majesty’s Government or the Government of any British possession or foreign country;

(e) the expression “officer of the Post Office” includes any person employed in any business of the Post office or on behalf of the Post Office;

(f) the expression “postage” means the duty chargeable for the transmission by post of postal articles;

(g) the expression “postage stamp” means any stamp provided by the Central Government for denoting postage or other fees or sums payable in respect of postal articles under this Act, and includes adhesive postage stamps and stamps printed, embossed, impressed or otherwise indicated on any envelope, wrapper, postcard or other article;

(h) the expression “Post Office” includes every house, building, room, carriage or place used for the purposes of the Post Office, and every letter-box provided by the Post Office for the reception of postal articles;

(i) the expression “postal article” includes a letter, postcard, newspaper, book, pattern or sample packet, parcel and every article or thing transmissible by post;

(j) the expression “Post Master General” includes a Deputy Post Master General or other officer exercising the powers of a Post Master General; and

(k) the expression “Post Office” means the department, <sup>1</sup>[established for the purposes of carrying the provisions of this Act into effect and] presided over by the Director General.

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**3. Meanings of “in course of transmission by post” and “delivery”.—**For the purposes of this Act—

(a) a postal article shall be deemed to be in course of transmission by the post from the time of its being delivered to a post office to the time of its being delivered to the addressee or of its being returned to the sender or otherwise disposed of under Chapter VII;

(b) the delivery of a postal article of any description to a postman or other person authorised to receive postal articles of that description for the post shall be deemed to be a delivery to a post office; and

(c) the delivery of a postal article at the house or office of the addressee, or to the addressee or his servant or agent or other person considered to be authorised to receive the article according to the usual manner of delivering postal articles to the addressee, shall be deemed to be delivery to the addressee.

## CHAPTER II

### PRIVILEGE AND PROTECTION OF THE GOVERNMENT

**4. Exclusive privilege of conveying letters reserved to the Government.**—(1) Wherever within <sup>3</sup>[India] posts or postal communications are established by the Central Government, the Central Government shall have the exclusive privilege of conveying by post, from one place to another, all letters except in the following cases, and shall also have the exclusive privilege of performing all the incidental services of receiving, collecting, sending, dispatching and delivering all letters, except in the following cases that is to say:—

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1. Ins. by Act 14 of 1914, s. 3.

2. Clause (1) omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule. Earlier was added by the A.O. 1950.

3. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.



(b) prescribe the postage to be charged on inland postal articles when the postage is not prepaid or is insufficiently prepaid;

(c) provide for the redirection of postal articles and the transmission by post of articles so redirected, either free of charge or subject to such further charge as may be specified in the rules; and

(d) prescribe the fees to be charged for the “express delivery” of postal articles, in addition to, or instead of, any other postage chargeable thereon under this Act.

*Explanation.*—“Express delivery” means delivery by a special messenger or conveyance.

**9. Power to make rules as to registered newspapers.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules providing for the registration of newspapers for transmission by inland post as registered newspapers.

(2) For the purpose of such registration, every publication, consisting wholly or in great part of political or other news, or of articles relating thereto or to other current topics, with or without advertisements, shall be deemed a newspaper, subject to the following conditions, namely:—

(a) that it is published in numbers at intervals of not more than thirty-one days; and

(b) that it has a *bona fide* list of subscribers.

(3) An extra or supplement to a newspaper, bearing the same date as the newspaper and transmitted therewith, shall be deemed to be part of the newspaper:

Provided that no such extra or supplement shall be so deemed unless it consists wholly or in great part of matter like that of the newspaper and has the title and date of publication of the newspaper printed at the top of each page.

*Explanation.*—Nothing in this section or in the rules there under shall be construed to render it compulsory to send newspapers by the inland post.

**10. Power to declare rates of foreign postage.**—(1) Where arrangements are in force with the United Kingdom, or with any British possession or foreign country, for the transmission by post of postal articles between <sup>1</sup>[India] and the United Kingdom or such possession or country, the Central Government may, in conformity with the provisions of such arrangements, declare what postage rates and other sums shall be charged in respect of such postal articles, and may make rules as to the scale of weight, terms and conditions subject to which the rates so declared shall be charged.

(2) Unless and until such declaration as aforesaid is made, the existing rates and regulations shall continue in force.

**11. Liability for payment of postage.**—(1) The addressee of a postal article on which postage or any other sum chargeable under this Act is due, shall be bound to pay the postage or sum so chargeable on his accepting delivery of the postal article, unless he forthwith returns it unopened:

Provided that, if any such postal article appears to the satisfaction of the Post Master General to have been maliciously sent for the purpose of annoying the addressee, he may remit the postage.

(2) If any postal article on which postage or any other sum chargeable under this Act is due, is refused or returned as aforesaid, or if the addressee is dead or cannot be found, then the sender shall be bound to pay the postage or sum due thereon under this Act.

**12. Recovery of postage and other sums due in respect of postal articles.**—If any person refuses to pay any postage or other sum due from him under this Act in respect of any postal article, the sum so due may, on application made by an officer of the Post Office authorised in this behalf by the written order of the Post Master General, be recovered for the use of the Post Office from the person so refusing, as if it were a fine imposed under this Act, by any Magistrate having jurisdiction where that person may for the time being be resident; and the Post Master General may further direct that any other postal article,

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1. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

not being on <sup>1</sup>[Government] service, addressed to that person shall be withheld from him until the sum so due is paid or recovered as aforesaid.

**13. Customs duty paid by the post office to be recoverable as postage.**—When a postal article, on which any duty of customs is payable, has been received by post from any place beyond the limits of <sup>2</sup>[India], and the duty has been paid by the postal authorities at any customs-port or elsewhere, the amount of the duty shall be recoverable as if it were postage due under this Act.

**14. Post Office marks *prima facie* evidence of certain facts denoted.**—In every proceeding for the recovery of any postage or other sum alleged to be due under this Act in respect of a postal article,—

(a) the production of the postal article, having thereon the official mark of the Post Office denoting that the article has been refused, or that the addressee is dead or cannot be found, shall be *prima facie* evidence of the fact so denoted, and

(b) the person from whom the postal article purports to have come, shall, until the contrary is proved, be deemed to be the sender thereof.

**15. Official mark to be evidence of amount of postage.**—The official mark on a postal article denoting that any postage or other sum is due in respect thereof to the Post Office of <sup>1</sup>[India] or to the Post Office of the United Kingdom or of any British possession or foreign country, shall be *prima facie* evidence that the sum denoted as aforesaid is so due.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### POSTAGE STAMPS

**16. Provision of postage stamps and power to make rules as to them.**—(1) The Central Government shall cause postage stamps to be provided of such kinds and denoting such values as it may think necessary for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Central Government may make rules as to the supply, sale and use of postage stamps.

(3) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

(a) fix the price at which postage stamps shall be sold;

(b) declare the classes of postal articles in respect of which postage stamps shall be used for the payment of postage or other sums chargeable under this Act;

(c) prescribe the conditions with regard to perforation, defacement and all other matters subject to which postage stamps may be accepted or refused in payment of postage or other sums;

(d) regulate the custody, supply and sale of postage stamps;

(e) declare the persons by whom and the terms and conditions subject to which postage stamps may be sold; and

(f) prescribe the duties and remuneration of persons selling postage stamps.

**17. Postage stamps to be deemed to be stamps for the purpose of revenue.**—<sup>3</sup>[(1)] Postage stamps provided under section 16 shall be deemed to be stamps issued by Government for the purpose of revenue within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) and, subject to the other provisions of this Act, shall be used for the prepayment of postage or other sums chargeable under this Act in respect of postal articles, except where the Central Government directs that prepayment shall be made in some other way.

<sup>4</sup>[(2) Where the Central Government has directed that prepayment of postage or other sums chargeable under this Act in respect of postal articles may be made by prepaying the value denoted by the

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1. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “Her Majesty’s”.

2. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

3. Section 17 re-numbered as sub-section (1) thereof by Act 16 of 1924, s. 2.

4. Ins. by s. 2, *ibid.*



impressions of stamping machines issued under its authority, the impression of any such machine shall likewise be deemed to be a stamp issued by Government for the purpose of revenue, within the meaning of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860).]

## CHAPTER V

### CONDITIONS OF TRANSMISSION OF POSTAL ARTICLES

**18. Redelivery to sender of postal article in course of transmission by post.**—<sup>(1)</sup> The Central Government may, by rule, provide for the redelivery to the sender, without reference to the consent of the addressee and subject to such conditions (if any), as may be deemed fit, of any postal article in course of transmission by post.

(2) Save as provided by any rules that may be made under sub-section (1), the sender shall not be entitled to recall a postal article in course of transmission by post.

**19. Transmission by post of anything injurious prohibited.**—<sup>(1)</sup> Except as otherwise provided by rule and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed thereby, no person shall send by post any explosive, dangerous, filthy, noxious or deleterious substance, any sharp instrument not properly protected, or any living creature which is either noxious or likely to injure postal articles in course of transmission by post or any officer of the Post Office.

(2) No person shall send by post any article or thing which is likely to injure postal articles in course of transmission by post or any officer of the Post Office.

**<sup>1</sup>[19A. Transmission by post of tickets, proposals, etc., relating to unauthorised lotteries prohibited.**—No person shall send by post,—

(a) any ticket, proposal or advertisement relating to a lottery; or

(b) any other matter descriptive of, or otherwise relating to, a lottery, which is calculated to act as an inducement to persons to participate in that lottery.

*Explanation.*—In this section “lottery” does not include a lottery organised or authorised by the Government.]

**20. Transmission by post of anything indecent, etc., prohibited.**—No person shall send by post—

(a) any indecent or obscene printing, painting, photograph, lithograph, engraving, book or card, or any other indecent or obscene article, or

(b) any postal article having thereon, or on the cover thereof, any words, marks or designs of an indecent, obscene, seditious, scurrilous, threatening or grossly offensive character.

**21. Power to make rules as to transmission by post of postal articles.**—<sup>2</sup>[(1) The Central Government may make rules as to the transmission of articles by post.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

(a) specify articles which may not be transmitted by post;

(b) prescribe conditions on which articles may be transmitted by post;

(c) provide for the detention and disposal of articles in course of transmission by post in contravention of rules made under clause (a) or clause (b);

(d) provide for the granting of receipts for, and the granting and obtaining of certificates of, posting and delivery of postal articles and the sums to be paid, in addition to any other postage, for such receipts and certificates; and

(e) regulate covers, forms, dimensions, maximum weights, and enclosures, and the use of postal articles, other than Setters, for making communications.]

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1. Ins. by Act 7 of 1958, s. 2.

2. Subs. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 2, for sub-sections (1) and (2).

(3) Postal articles shall be posted and delivered at such times and in such manner as the Director General may, by order, from time to time, appoint.

**22. Power to postpone dispatch or delivery of certain postal articles.**—<sup>(1)</sup> Where the dispatch or delivery from a post office of letters would be delayed by the dispatch or delivery therefrom at the same time of book, pattern or sample packets and parcels, or any of them, such packets or parcels, or any of them, may, subject to such rules as the Central Government may make in this behalf, be detained in the Post Office so long as may be necessary.

(2) Where separate parcel posts are established, parcels may be forwarded and conveyed by them, being detained, if necessary, in the Post Office for that purpose.

**23. Power to deal with postal articles posted in contravention of Act.**—<sup>(1)</sup> Any postal article sent by post in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act may be detained and either returned to the sender or forwarded to destination, in each case charged with such additional postage (if any), as the Central Government may, by rule, direct.

(2) Any officer in charge of a post office or authorised by the Post Master General in this behalf may open or unfasten any newspaper or any book, pattern or sample packet, in course of transmission by post, which he suspects to have been sent by post in contravention of <sup>1</sup>[section 20, clause (a), or of] section 21 or of any of the provisions of this Act relating to postage.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in sub-section (1)—

(a) any postal article sent by post in contravention of the provisions of section 19 <sup>2</sup>[or section 19A] may, under the authority of the Post Master General, if necessary, be opened and destroyed; and

<sup>3</sup>[(b) any postal article sent by post in contravention of the provisions of section 20 may be disposed of in such manner as the Central Government may, by rule, direct.]

**24. Power to deal with postal articles containing goods contraband or liable to duty.**—<sup>4</sup>[Except as otherwise provided in this Act, where a postal article suspected to contain any goods of which the import by post or the transmission by post is prohibited by or under any enactment for the time being in force,] or anything liable to duty, is received for delivery at a post office, the officer in charge of the post office shall send a notice in writing to the addressee inviting him to attend, either in person or by agent, within a specified time at the post office, and shall in the presence of the addressee or his agent, or if the addressee or his agent fails to attend as aforesaid then in his absence, open and examine the postal article:

Provided, first, that, if the Director General so directs in the case of any post office or class of post offices, the officer in charge of the post office shall call in two respectable persons as witnesses before he opens a postal article in the absence of the addressee or his agent:

Provided, secondly, that in all cases a postal article, after being opened under this section, shall be delivered to the addressee, unless it is required for the purpose of any further proceeding under this or any other law or enactment for the time being in force, and that the opening of the postal article and the circumstances connected therewith shall be immediately reported to the Post Master General.

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**<sup>6</sup>[24A. Power to deliver such articles to Customs authority.**—The Central Government may, by general or special order, empower any officer of the Post Office, specified in such order, to deliver postal article, received from beyond the limits of <sup>7</sup>[India] and suspected to contain anything liable to duty, to such Customs authority as may be specified in the said order, and such Customs authority shall deal with

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1. Ins. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 3.

2. Ins. by Act 7 of 1958, s. 3.

3. Subs. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 3, for clause (b).

4. Subs. by s. 4, *ibid.*, for “Where a postal article, suspected to contain any contraband goods”.

5. The proviso omitted by Act 15 of 1921, s. 2.

6. Ins. by s. 3, *ibid.*

7. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

such article in accordance with the provisions of the Sea Customs Act, 1878 (8 of 1878)<sup>1</sup>, or of any other law for the time being in force.]

**25. Power to intercept notified goods during transmission by post.**—Where a notification has been published under section 19 of the Sea Customs Act, 1878 (8 of 1878), in respect of any goods of any specified description <sup>2</sup>[or where the import or export into or from <sup>3</sup>[India] of goods of any specified description has been prohibited or restricted by or under any other enactment for the time being in force], any officer of the post office empowered in this behalf by the Central Government may search, or cause search to be made, for any such goods in course of transmission by post, and shall deliver <sup>4</sup>[all postal articles reasonably believed or found to contain such goods] to such officer as the Central Government may appoint in this behalf, and such goods may be disposed of in such manner as the Central Government may direct <sup>5</sup>[In carrying out any such search, such officer of the Post Office may open or unfasten, or cause to be opened or unfastened, any newspaper or any book, pattern or sample packet in course of transmission by post.]

**26. Power to intercept postal articles for public good.**—(1) On the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety or tranquility, the Central Government, or a State Government, or any officer specially authorized in this behalf <sup>6</sup>[by the Central or the State Government], may, by order in writing direct that any postal article or class or description of postal articles in course of transmission by post shall be intercepted or detained, or <sup>7</sup>[shall be disposed of in such manner as the authority issuing the order may direct].

(2) If any doubt arises as to the existence of a public emergency, or as to whether any act done under sub-section (1) was in the interest of the public safety or tranquility, a certificate <sup>8</sup>[of the Central Government or, as the case may be, of the State Government] shall be conclusive proof on the point.

**27. Power to deal with postal articles from abroad bearing fictitious or previously used stamps.**—(1) Where a postal article is received by post from any place beyond the limits of <sup>3</sup>[India]—

(a) bearing a fictitious postage stamp, that is to say any facsimile or imitation or representation of a postage stamp, or

(b) purporting to be prepaid with any postage stamp which has been previously used to prepay any other postal article, the officer in charge of the post office at which the postal article is received, shall send a notice to the addressee inviting him to attend, either in person or by agent, within a specified time at the post office to receive delivery of the postal article.

(2) If the addressee or his agent attends at the post office within the time specified in the notice and consents to make known to the officer-in-charge of the post office the name and address of the sender of the postal article and to redeliver to the officer aforesaid the portion of the postal article which bears the address and the fictitious or previously used postage stamp, or, if the postal article is inseparable from the stamp, the entire postal article, the postal article shall be delivered to the addressee or his agent.

(3) If the addressee or his agent fails to attend at the post office within the time specified in the notice, or, having attended within that time, refuses to make known the name and address of the sender or to redeliver the postal article or portion thereof as required by subsection (2), the postal article shall not be delivered to him, but shall be disposed of in such manner as the Central Government may direct.

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1. See now the Customs Act, 1962.

2. Ins. by Act 2 of 1930, s. 40 and Schedule II.

3. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

4. Subs. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 5, for “all such goods found”.

5. Ins. by s. 5, *ibid.*

6. Subs. by the A.O. 1937, for “by the Governor General in Council”.

7. Subs. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 6, for “shall be delivered to the Government or to an officer thereof mentioned in the order, to be disposed of in such manner as the Governor General in Council may direct”.

8. Subs. by A.O. 1937, for “singd by a Secretary to the G. of I. or to the L.G.”.

*Explanation.*—For the purposes of this section, the expression “postage stamp” includes any postage stamp for denoting any rate or duty of postage of any part of <sup>1</sup>[India or of His Majesty’s dominions] or foreign country <sup>2</sup>[and the impression of any stamping machine provided or authorised for the like purpose to be by or under the authority of the Government of such <sup>3</sup>[part or country]].

<sup>4</sup>[**27A. Prohibition of transmission by post of certain newspapers.**—No newspaper printed and published in <sup>5</sup>[India] without conforming to the rules laid down in the Press, and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (25 of 1867), shall be transmitted by post.

**27B. Power to detain newspapers and other articles being transmitted by post.**—(1) Any officer of the Post Office authorised by the Post Master General in this behalf may detain any postal article in course of transmission by post which he suspects to contain—

(a) (i) any newspaper or book as defined in the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (25 of 1867); or

(ii) any document;

containing any seditious matter, that is to say, any matter the publication of which is punishable under section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860); or

(b) any newspaper as defined in the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (25 of 1867), edited, printed or published otherwise than in conformity with the rules laid down in this Act;

and shall deliver any postal article so detained to such officer as the State Government may appoint in this behalf.

(2) Any officer detaining any postal article under the provisions of sub-section (1) shall forthwith send by post to the addressee of such article, notice of the fact of such detention.

(3) The State Government shall cause the contents of any postal article detained under sub-section (1) to be examined, and, if it appears to the State Government that the article contained any newspaper, book or other document, of the nature described in clause (a) or clause (b) of sub-section (1), may pass such orders as to the disposal of the article and its contents as it may deem proper, and, if it does not so appear, shall release the article and its contents, unless the same be otherwise liable to seizure under any law for the time being in force:

Provided that any person interested in any article detained under the provisions of clause (a) of sub-section (1) may, within two months from the date of such detention, apply to the State Government for release of the same, and the State Government shall consider such application and pass such orders thereon as it may deem to be proper:

Provided also that, if such application is rejected, the applicant may, within two months from the date of the order rejecting the application, apply to the High Court for release of the article and its contents on the ground that the article did not contain any newspaper, book or other document containing any seditious matter.

(4) In this section “document” includes also any painting, drawing or photograph, or other visible representation.

**27C. Procedure for disposal by High Court of applications for release of newspapers and articles so detained.**—Every application made under the second proviso to sub-section (3) of section 27B shall be heard and determined in the manner provided by sections 99D to 99F of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (5 of 1898), by a Special Bench of the High Court constituted in the manner provided by section 99C of that Code.

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1. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “Her Majesty’s dominions or of any Indian State”.

2. Ins. by Act 16 of 1924, s. 3.

3. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “part, State or country”.

4. Ins. by Act 14 of 1922, s. 6 and the Fourth Schedule.

5. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

**27D. Jurisdiction barred.**—No order passed or action taken under section 27B shall be called in question in any court otherwise than in accordance with the second proviso to sub-section (3) of that section.]

## CHAPTER VI

### REGISTRATION, INSURANCE AND VALUE-PAYABLE POST

**28. Registration of postal articles.**—The sender of a postal article may, subject to the other provisions of this Act, have the article registered at the post office at which it is posted, and require a receipt therefore; and the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, direct that, in addition to any postage chargeable under this Act, such further fee as may be fixed by the notification shall be paid on account of the registration of post at articles.

**29. Power to make rules as to registration.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules as to the registration of postal articles.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

(a) declare in what cases registration shall be required;

(b) prescribe the manner in which the fees for registration shall be paid; and

(c) direct that twice the fee for registration shall be levied on the delivery of a postal article required to be registered on which the fee for registration has not been prepaid.

(3) postal articles made over to the Post Office for the purpose of being registered, shall be delivered, when registered, at such times and in such manner as the Director General may, by order, from time to time appoint.

**30. Insurance of postal articles.**—The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette direct—

(a) that any postal article may, subject to the other provisions of this Act, be insured at the post office at which it is posted, against the risk of loss or damage in course of transmission by post, and that a receipt therefore shall be granted to the person posting it; and

(b) that, in addition to any postage and fees for registration chargeable under this Act, such further fee as may be fixed by the notification shall be paid on account of the insurance of postal articles.

**31. Power to require insurance of postal articles.**—The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare in what cases insurance shall be required, and direct that any postal article containing anything required to be insured, which has been posted without being insured, shall be returned to the sender or shall be delivered to the addressee, subject to the payment of such special fee as may be fixed by the notification:

Provided that the levy of such special fee as aforesaid shall not impose any liability upon <sup>1</sup>[the Central Government] <sup>2\*\*\*</sup> in respect of the postal article.

**32. Power to make rules as to insurance.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules as to the insurance of postal articles.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

(a) declare what classes of postal articles may be insured under section 30;

(b) fix the limit of the amount for which postal articles may be insured; and

(c) prescribe the manner in which the fees for insurance shall be paid.

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1. Subs. by the A.O. 1937, for “the Secretary of State for India in Council”.

2. The words “or the Secretary of State” omitted by the A.O. 1948.

(3) Postal articles made over to the Post Office for the purpose of being insured, shall be delivered, when insured, at such places and times and in such manner as the Director General may, by order, from time to time, appoint.

**33. Liability in respect of postal articles insured.**—Subject to such conditions and restrictions as the Central Government may, by rule, prescribe <sup>1</sup>[the Central Government] shall be liable to pay compensation, not exceeding the amount for which a postal article has been insured, to the sender thereof for the loss of the postal article or its contents, or for any damage caused to it in course of transmission by post:

Provided that the compensation so payable shall in no case exceed the value of the article lost or the amount of the damage caused.

**34. Transmission by post of value-payable postal articles.**—The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, direct that, subject to the other provisions of this Act and to the payment of fees at such rates as may be fixed by the notification, a sum of money specified in writing at the time of posting by the sender of a postal article shall be recoverable on the delivery thereof from the addressee, and that the sum, so recovered, shall be paid to the sender:

Provided that <sup>2</sup>[the Central Government shall not] incur any liability in respect of the sum specified for recovery, unless and until that sum has been received from the addressee.

*Explanation.*—Postal articles sent in accordance with the provisions of this section may be described as “value-payable” postal articles.

**35. Power to make rules as to value-payable postal articles.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules as to the transmission by post of value-payable postal articles.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

(a) declare what classes of postal articles may be sent as value-payable postal articles.

(b) direct that no postal article shall be so sent unless the sender declares that it is sent in execution of a *bona fide* order received by him;

(c) limit the value to be recovered on the delivery of any value-payable postal article; <sup>3\*\*\*</sup>

(d) prescribe the form of declaration to be made by the senders of value-payable postal articles, and the time and manner of the payment of fees;

<sup>4</sup>[(e) provide for the retention and repayment to the addressee in cases of fraud of money recovered on the delivery of any value-payable postal article; and

(f) prescribe the fees to be charged for inquiries into complaints regarding the delivery of or payment for value-payable postal articles.]

(3) Postal articles shall be made over to the Post Office for the purpose of being sent as “value-payable” and shall be delivered, when so sent, at such times and in such manner as the Director General may, by order, from time to time, appoint.

<sup>4</sup>[(4) No suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted against <sup>1</sup>[the Central Government <sup>5\*\*\*</sup>] or any officer of the Post Office in respect of anything done, or in good faith purporting to be done, under any rule made under clause (e) of sub-section (2).]

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1. Subs. by the A.O. 1937 for “the Secretary of State for India in Council”.

2. Subs. by the A.O. 1948, for “neither the Central Government nor the Secretary of State shall” which was substituted by the A.O. 1937, for “the Secretary of State of India in Council shall not”.

3. The word “and” omitted by Act 3 of 1912, s. 7.

4. Ins. by s. 7, *ibid.*

5. The words “the Secretary of State” omitted by the A.O. 1948.

**36. Power to give effect to arrangements with other countries.**—(1) Where arrangements <sup>1</sup>[made] with the United Kingdom, or with any British possession, <sup>2</sup>[<sup>3</sup>\*\*\* or foreign country are in force], for the transmission by post of registered, insured or value-payable postal articles between <sup>4</sup>[India] and the United Kingdom or such possession <sup>5</sup>[<sup>6</sup>\*\*\* or country], the Central Government may make rules to give effect to such arrangements.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may prescribe—

- (a) the form of declaration to be made by the senders of such postal articles as aforesaid; and
- (b) the fees to be charged in respect thereof.

## CHAPTER VII

### UNDELIVERED POSTAL ARTICLES

**37. Power to make rules as to disposal of undelivered postal articles.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules as to the disposal of postal articles which for any reason cannot be delivered (hereinafter referred to as “undelivered postal articles”).

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may—

- (a) prescribe the period during which undelivered postal articles at a post office shall remain in that office; and
- (b) provide for the publication of lists of undelivered postal articles, or of any class of undelivered postal articles.

(3) Every undelivered postal article, after being detained at a post office for the period prescribed by rule under the foregoing provisions of this section, shall be either forwarded, free of further charge, to the post office at which it was posted, for return to the sender, or sent to the office of the Post Master General.

**38. Disposal of undelivered postal articles at office of Post Master General.**—(1) Every postal article received at the office of the Post Master General under sub-section (3) of Section 37 shall be dealt with as follows:—

- (a) if practicable, it shall be re-directed and forwarded by post to the addressee; or
- (b) if it cannot be re-directed and forwarded as aforesaid, it shall be opened by some officer, appointed by the Post Master General in this behalf and bound to secrecy, in order to ascertain the name and address of the sender.

(2) If the name and address of the sender are so ascertained, it shall be returned by post to the sender, free of further charge or subject to such further charge as the Central Government may, by rule, direct.

**39. Final disposal of undelivered postal articles.**—Undelivered postal articles which cannot be disposed of under the foregoing provisions, shall be detained in the office of the Post Master General for such further period (if any), and shall be dealt with in such manner, as the Central Government may, by rule, direct:

Provided that—

- (a) letters and postcards shall be destroyed;
- (b) money or saleable property, not being of a perishable nature, found in any undelivered postal article, shall be detained for a period of one year in the office of the Post Master General, and, if on

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1. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “are in force”.

2. Subs., *ibid.*, for “Indian State or foreign country”.

3. The words and letters “Indian State corresponding to a Part B State” omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule.

4. Subs. by s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, *ibid.*, for “the States”.

5. Subs. by the A.O. 1950 for “State or country”.

6. The words and letter “Part B State” omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule.

the expiration of that period no person has established his right thereto, shall, if money, be credited to the Post Office and, if saleable property, be sold, the sale-proceeds being credited to the Post Office.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SHIP LETTERS

**40. Duty of master of ship, departing from any port in India and not being a mail ship, to convey mail bags.**—The master of ship, not being a mail ship, about to depart from any port in <sup>1</sup>[India] to any port within, or any port or place beyond, <sup>1</sup>[India], shall receive on board any mail bag tendered to him by any officer of the Post Office for conveyance, granting a receipt there for in such form as the Central Government may, by rule, prescribe, and shall, without delay, deliver the same at the port or place of destination.

**41. Duty of master of ship arriving at any port in India in respect of postal articles and mail bags on board.**—(1) The master of a ship arriving at any port in <sup>1</sup>[India] shall, without delay, cause every postal article or mail bag on board which is directed to that port and is within the exclusive privilege conferred on the Central Government by section 4, to be delivered either at the post office at that port or to some officer of the Post Office authorised in this behalf by the Post Master General.

(2) If there is on board any postal article or mail bag which is directed to any other place within <sup>1</sup>[India] and is within the exclusive privilege aforesaid, the master shall, without delay, report the fact to the officer in charge of the post office at the port of arrival and act according to the directions he may receive from such officer, and the receipt of such officer shall discharge him from all further responsibility in respect of the postal articles or mail bag.

**42. Allowance of gratuities for conveyance of postal articles by ships other than mail ships.**—The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare what gratuities shall be allowed to masters of ships, not being mail ships, in respect of postal articles received by them for conveyance on behalf of the Post Office; and the master of a ship, not being a mail ship, about to leave any port in <sup>1</sup>[India] as aforesaid shall, if he receives on board a mail bag for conveyance, be entitled to demand and obtain immediately the amount of the gratuity payable under this section in respect of the mail bag and its contents.

## CHAPTER IX

### MONEY ORDERS

**43. Power to maintain money order system and to make rules as to remittances thereby.**—(1) The Central Government may provide for the remitting of small sums of money through the Post Office by means of money orders, and may make rules as to such money orders.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may prescribe—

- (a) the limit of amount for which money orders may be issued;
- (b) the period during which money orders shall remain current; and
- (c) the rates of commission or the fees to be charged on money orders or in respect thereof.

**44. Power for remitter to recall money order or alter name of payee.**—(1) Subject to such conditions as the Central Government may, by rules made under section 43, prescribe in respect of the levy of additional rates of commission or fees or any other matters, a person remitting money through the Post Office by means of a money order may require that the amount of the order, if not paid to the payee, be repaid to him, or be paid to such person other than the original payee as he may direct.

(2) If neither the payee nor the remitter of a money order can be found, and if within the period of one year from the date of issue of the order no claim is made by such payee or remitter, the amount of such order shall not be claimable from the Government.

**45. Power to provide for the issue of postal orders.**—<sup>2</sup>[(1)] The Central Government may authorise the issue, in such form as may be suitable, of money orders, to be called postal orders or by such other

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1. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

2. Section 45 re-numbered as sub-section (1) thereof by Act 34 of 1970, s. 2.



designation as may be deemed appropriate, for certain fixed amounts, and may make rules as to the rates of commission to be charged thereon and the manner in which, and conditions subject to which, they may be issued, paid and cancelled.

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<sup>2</sup>[(2) The Central Government may also make rules prescribing the maximum limit of amount up to which postal orders may be issued from time to time].

**46. Power to give effect to arrangements with other countries.**—(1) Where arrangements <sup>3</sup>[made] with the United Kingdom, or with any British possession <sup>4</sup>[<sup>5</sup>\*\*\*\* or foreign country are in force], for the issue and payment through the Post Office of money orders between <sup>6</sup>[India] and the United Kingdom or such possession, <sup>7</sup>[<sup>8</sup>\*\*\*\* or country], the Central Government may make rules to give effect to such arrangements.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may prescribe—

(a) the manner in which, and the conditions subject to which, such orders may be issued and paid in <sup>6</sup>[India]; and

(b) the rates of commission to be charged thereon.

**47. Recovery of money order paid to the wrong person.**—If any person, without reasonable excuse, the burden of proving which shall lie on him, neglects or refuses to refund—

(a) any amount paid to him in respect of a money order by an officer of the Post Office in excess of what ought to have been paid to him in respect thereof, or

(b) the amount of a money order paid by an officer of the Post Office to him instead of to some other person to whom it ought to have been paid,

such amount shall be recoverable by an officer of the Post Office authorised by the Post Master General in this behalf from the person so neglecting or refusing as if it were an arrear of land revenue due from him.<sup>9</sup>

**48. Exemption from liability in respect of money orders.**—No suit or other legal proceeding shall be instituted against <sup>10</sup>[the Government] or any officer of the Post Office in respect of—

(a) anything done under any rules made by the Central Government under this Chapter; or

(b) the wrong payment of a money order caused by incorrect or incomplete information given by the remitter as to the name and address of the payee, provided that, as regards incomplete information, there was reasonable justification for accepting the information as a sufficient description for the purpose of identifying the payee; or

(c) the payment of any money order being refused or delayed by, or on account of, any accidental neglect, omission or mistake, by, or on the part of, an officer of the Post Office, or for any other cause whatsoever, other than the fraud or willful act or default of such officer; or

(d) any wrong payment of a money order after the expiration of one year from the date of the issue of the order; <sup>11</sup>[or]

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1. The proviso omitted by Act 34 of 1970, s. 2.

2. Ins. by s. 2, *ibid.*

3. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “are in force”.

4. Subs., *ibid.*, “Indian State or foreign country”.

5. The words and letter “Indian State corresponding to a Part B State” omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule.

6. Subs. by s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, *ibid.*, for “the States”.

7. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “State or country”.

8. The words and letter “Part B State” omitted by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule.

9. See the Revenue Recovery Act, 1890 (1 of 1890).

10. Subs. by the A.O. 1950, for “the Crown” which had been subs. titled by the A.O. 1937, for “the Secretary of State for India in Council”.

11. Ins. by Act 3 of 1912, s. 8.

(e) any wrong payment or delay in payment of a money order beyond the limits of <sup>1</sup>[India] by an officer of any Post Office, not being one established by the Central Government.)

[CHAPTER X.—PENALTIES AND PROCEDURE] Omitted by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment Of Provisions) Act, 2023 (18 of 2023) s. 2 and Schedule (w.e.f. 29-12-2023).

## CHAPTER XI

### SUPPLEMENTAL

**73. Zamindari and other district posts.**—(1) The Central Government may make rules for tire management of any zamindari or other district posts.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may declare what portions of this Act shall be applicable to zamindari and other district posts and to the persons employed in connection therewith.

**74. General power to make rules and provisions as to rules under Act.**—(1) In addition to the powers hereinbefore conferred, the Central Government may make rules to carry out any of the purposes of objects of this Act.

(2) In making any rule under this Act, the Central Government may direct that a breach of it shall be punishable with fine which may extend to fifty rupees.

(3) All rules made by the Central Government under this Act shall be published in the Official Gazette and, on such publication, shall have effect as if enacted by this Act.

<sup>2</sup>[(4) Every rule made by the Central Government 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 both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule 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.]

**75. Delegation of powers, other than rule-making powers to Director General.**—The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette 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 a power to make rules.

**76. [Repeal.]** Rep. by the Repealing and Amending Act, 1914 (10 of 1914), s. 3 and the Second Schedule.

**77. [Saving.]** Rep. by the Repealing and Amending Act, 1952 (48 of 1952), s. 2 and the First Schedule.

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1. Subs. by Act 25 of 1950, s. 11 and the Fourth Schedule, for “the States”.

2. Ins. by Act 4 of 2005, s. 2 and Schedule (w.e.f. 11-1-2005).

<sup>1</sup>[THE FIRST SCHEDULE

(See section 7)

INLAND POSTAGE RATES

*Letters*

For a weight not exceeding twenty grams Rs. 5.00

For every twenty grams, or fraction thereof, exceeding twenty grams Rs. 5.00

*Letter-cards*

For a letter-card Rs. 2.50.

*Post cards*

Post cards (not being post cards containing printed communication, competition post cards or *Meghdoot* post cards)

Single 50 paise

Reply Re. 1.00.

*Meghdoot post cards*

Post cards containing printed advertisement on the address side (not being post cards containing printed communication or competition post cards)

For a *Meghdoot* post card 25 paise.

*Printed post cards*

Post cards containing printed communication (not being competition post cards or *Meghdoot* post cards)

For a post cards Rs. 6.00.

*Explanation.*—A post shall be deemed to contain a printed communication, if any matter (except the name and address of, and other particulars relating to, the sender and the place and date of dispatch) is recorded by printing or by cyclostyling or by any other mechanical process, not being typewriting, on any part of the post card except the right hand half of the address-side thereof.

*Competition post cards*

For a post card Rs. 10.00

*Explanation.*—A post card shall be deemed to be a competition post cards if it is used in response to any competition organized on or through television, radio, newspaper, magazine or any other media.

*Book, pattern and sample packets*

For the first fifty grams or fraction thereof Rs. 4.00

For every additional fifty grams, or fraction thereof, in excess of fifty grams Rs. 3.00

*Registered newspapers*

For a weight not exceeding fifty grams 25 paise

For a weight exceeding fifty grams but not exceeding one hundred grams 50 paise

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1. Subs. by 20 of 2002, s. 156, for the First Schedule (w.e.f. 1-6-2002).

For every additional one hundred grams, or 20 paise  
fraction thereof, Exceeding one hundred grams

In the case of more than one copy of the same issue of a registered newspaper being carried in the same packet—

For a weight not exceeding one hundred, grams 50 paise

For every additional one hundred grams, or  
fraction thereof, 20 paise:  
exceeding one hundred grams

Provided that such packet shall not be delivered at any addressee's residence but shall be given to a recognized agent at the Post Office.

*Parcels*

For a weight not exceeding five hundred grams Rs. 19.00

For every five hundred grams, or fraction thereof, exceeding five hundred grams Rs. 16.00.]

*THE SECOND SCHEDULE. [Enactments repealed.] Rep. by the Repealing and Amending Act, 1914 (10 of 1914), s. 3 and the Second Schedule.*

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