October 26th , 2026




## Legal Updates

**MoC invites suggestions on the application of Indian Coal Exchange Limited for registration as a Coal Exchange**

The Ministry of Coal ("**MoC**"), through the Coal Controller Organisation ("**CCO**"), has, vide Notice dated 01.10.2026, invited suggestions from stakeholders on the application received from Indian Coal Exchange Limited ("**Applicant**") to set up and operate a coal exchange under the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 ("**Rules**"). The notice is issued under Rule 8(1) of the Rules, which requires the applicant's details to be published and suggestions invited within 30 days of publication.

The Applicant, incorporated on 01.06.2026, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Energy Exchange Limited and proposes to establish and operate electronic trading platforms and e-marketplaces for trading in coal, coal-related certificates and other coal-linked instruments, including spot, forward, futures and other permitted contracts.

Note: The notice, though dated 01.10.2026, was made available on the website of the MoC on 15.10.2026 and can be accessed *here*.

**MoC invites suggestions on the application of MCX Coal Exchange of India Limited for registration as a Coal Exchange**

MoC through the Coal Controller Organisation ("**CCO**"), has, vide Notice dated 01.10.2026, invited suggestions from stakeholders on the application received from MCX Coal Exchange of India Limited ("**Applicant**") to set up and operate a coal exchange under the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 ("**Rules**"). The notice is issued under Rule 8(1) of the Rules, which requires the applicant's details to be published, and suggestions invited within 30 days of publication.

The Applicant, incorporated on 11.06.2026, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited and proposes to provide a trading platform for coal, coal-related products and other energy instruments, with a hedging mechanism to mitigate risk.

Note: The notice, though dated 01.10.2026, was made available on the website of the MoC on 15.10.2026 and can be accessed *here.*

**MoC invites comments / suggestions on Draft Colliery Control (Amendment) Rules, 2026**

MoC has, vide notification dated 01.10.2026, published the Draft Colliery Control (Amendment) Rules, 2026 ("**Draft Rules**") to further amend the Colliery Control Rules, 2004 ("Principal Rules"). The Draft Rules propose to introduce a specific framework for monitoring and enforcing compliance with approved mining plans by the Coal Controller Organisation ("**CCO**").

The key proposed amendments are as follows:

(a) **Competent Authority (Rule 9A)** – The Coal Controller, or an authorised officer of the CCO may determine compliance with an approved mining plan, except in respect of matters specifically governed by the Director General of Mines Safety or other statutory regulatory bodies.

(b) **Compliance and suspension of mining operations (Rule 9B)**

- Mining operations must be carried out in accordance with the approved mining plan. In the event of a deviation, the competent authority must notify the colliery owner and direct rectification within a specified period.
- If the violation remains unrectified, the authority may issue a 15-day show-cause notice and, in the absence of a satisfactory reply within 15 days of receipt of the notice, suspend all or any mining operations, permitting only such operations as are necessary to bring mining conditions into conformity with the mining plan.
- Where considered necessary in the interests of public safety, environmental protection or prevention of imminent or irreparable harm, the authority may temporarily suspend all or any mining operations for reasons recorded in writing, without following the ordinary notice procedure. The suspension may subsequently be revoked in the circumstances specified under Rule 9B (5).

(c) **Annual declaration (Rule 9C) –** The board of the project proponent, or the colliery owner where the project proponent is not an incorporated company, must submit an annual declaration to the Coal Controller confirming that all mining operations for the coal/lignite mine have been carried out in accordance with the approved mining plan and all applicable laws.

(d) **Revision (Rule 17) –** An order passed by the Deputy Coal Controller under Rule 9B may be challenged in revision before the Coal Controller within 30 days of its communication. An order passed by an officer subordinate to the Deputy Coal Controller may be challenged before the Deputy Coal Controller within the same period, with no further revision before the Coal Controller against the Deputy Coal Controller's order passed in that revision.

The Draft Rules also define the CCO's officer hierarchy (Deputy Coal Controller, Regional Head, Coal Superintendent, Assistant Coal Superintendent and Surveyor) and add definitions of "mining plan", "mine closure" and "mine closure plan".

The comments / suggestions can be submitted within 30 days from the date the Gazette copies are made available to the public.

The Draft Rules can be accessed *here*. The Principal Rules can be accessed *here*.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas ("**MoPNG**"), vide Notice dated 19.10.2026, invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders and members of the public on the draft Petroleum

**MoPNG invites comments on draft rules for inquiry and adjudication of penalties under Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines Act**

and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026 ("**Draft Rules**"), framed under the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962, as amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026. The Draft Rules seek to prescribe a uniform procedure for holding inquiries and imposing penalties for first contraventions under Section 15(1)(a) of the Act, ensuring transparency and adherence to the principles of natural justice.

The Draft Rules provide for the appointment of an adjudicating officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India. Complaints alleging a first contravention may be filed by the Central Government, State Government, competent authority, corporation proposing to lay, laying or maintaining the pipeline, or any other aggrieved person or person having personal knowledge of the alleged contravention. Complaints must specify the alleged contravention, identify the person concerned and include supporting documents or other relevant material. Complaints filed by persons other than the Government, competent authority or corporation will be subject to preliminary examination within 45 days to determine whether sufficient grounds exist to proceed.

Where proceedings are initiated, the adjudicating officer must issue a show-cause notice specifying the allegations and enclosing the complaint and supporting documents. The person concerned will have 60 days from receipt of the notice to submit a written explanation, with a possible
extension of up to 30 days for sufficient cause. The adjudicating officer must provide a reasonable opportunity of hearing within 30 days of receiving the explanation. The Draft Rules also provide for ex parte proceedings in specified circumstances, expert assistance where necessary, maintenance of a complete record of proceedings and a reasoned order, as far as practicable, within one year from receipt of the complaint, extendable by up to six months for reasons recorded in writing.

The Draft Rules further provide that penalties must be deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India within 45 days of receipt of the adjudication order, or within such extended period as may be permitted by the adjudicating officer. Failure to deposit the penalty may result in recovery as arrears of land revenue. Orders passed by the adjudicating officer may be appealed before the Appellate Tribunal in accordance with Section 15B of the Act. The adjudicating officer may also rectify clerical or arithmetical mistakes or errors apparent on the face of the record within 30 days of the order.

Stakeholders and members of the public may submit their comments and suggestions on the Draft Rules by email to **sogp2.png@nic.in** and **robin.82@nic.in**. The last date for submission is **20.11.2026**. The Draft Rules, once finalised and notified, will come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette. The Draft Rules can be accessed *here.*

**PNGRB has invited comments on the Draft Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (Authorizing Entities to Lay, Build, Operate or Expand City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks) Amendment Regulations, 2026**

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board ("**PNGRB**"), vide Public Notice dated 19.10.2026, invited comments from stakeholders and the general public on the draft Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (Authorizing Entities to Lay, Build, Operate or Expand City or Local Natural Gas Distribution Networks) Amendment Regulations, 2026 ("**Draft Amendment Regulations**"). The proposed amendments aim to facilitate the expeditious rollout of City Gas Distribution ("**CGD**") networks, ensure connectivity of each district through steel pipeline infrastructure, and promote uniform development of CGD infrastructure.

The Draft Amendment Regulations propose amendments to Regulation 9 to provide for progressive reductions in the Performance Bank Guarantee ("**PBG**") upon achievement of specified Domestic PNG ("**DPNG**") household connection targets. Following achievement of the Minimum Work Programme ("**MWP**") target and reduction of the PBG to 40% of its

original value, an authorised entity may avail a further 25% reduction upon achieving an additional 10% of DPNG household connections, calculated based on the geographical area's household data as per Census 2011. Further reductions of 25% of the reduced PBG amount are proposed for subsequent achievements, subject to a minimum PBG threshold of ₹10 crore, which must be maintained throughout the authorisation period.

The proposed amendments to Regulation 12 provide for a revised basis for calculating the exclusivity period by reference to the difference between the actual commissioning date of natural gas flow in the designated pipeline serving the geographical area and the date on which the CGD entity was ready to take gas. Further, an additional extension of the exclusivity period is proposed for authorised entities laying steel pipelines beyond their assigned MWP targets. No extension will be granted for up to 250 additional inch-km; an extension of one year may be granted for 251 to 1,000 additional inch-km; and an extension of two years may be granted for more than 1,000 additional inch-km. The extensions in the latter two cases are subject to all districts within the geographical area at the time of authorisation being connected through the steel pipeline network. These provisions are proposed to apply to eligible authorised entities whose MWP targets comprise only steel pipeline (inch-km), irrespective of the year of bidding or authorisation.

The Draft Amendment Regulations also propose an amendment to Regulation 14 to permit an authorised entity to levy a registration fee not exceeding ₹1,000 from a technically feasible domestic PNG customer, provided the requisite PNG infrastructure has been laid and the entity can provide the connection within the stipulated timeframe. The registration fee is to be adjusted against the interest-free, refundable security deposit collected from the customer towards securing the equipment and facilities provided by the authorised entity.

Stakeholders and members of the general public may submit their views and comments on the Draft Amendment Regulations by email to secretary@pngrb.gov.in or in writing to the Secretary, PNGRB, within 30 days from the date of the Public Notice, i.e., on or before 18.11.2026. The proposed amendments will come into force upon publication in the Official Gazette, if notified in the proposed form.

The Draft Amendment Regulations can be accessed *here.*

**MoPNG issues Operational Guidelines for Samudra Manthan Scheme**

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas ("**MoPNG**") on 22.10.2026 has issued the Operational Guidelines for Samudra Manthan (National Offshore Exploration Scheme), a Central Sector Scheme approved by the Cabinet with a total outlay of ₹84,084 crore until FY 2030-31. The Scheme aims to accelerate offshore, deepwater and ultra-deepwater exploration and production, strengthen India's energy security, reduce dependence on hydrocarbon imports and promote domestic capabilities across the exploration and production ("**E&P**") sector.

The Scheme comprises two principal components: (i) Offshore Data Acquisition, Processing and Interpretation, covering 2D and 3D seismic data acquisition, data reprocessing and implementation of Artificial Intelligence ("AI") tools; and (ii) Offshore Exploration Acceleration and Infrastructure-Led Production, covering offshore exploration, common infrastructure for deepwater production and the development of oil and gas manufacturing and services zones. The Scheme applies to deepwater and ultra-deepwater offshore sedimentary basins within India's Exclusive Economic Zone, including the East and West Coasts and the Andaman basin.

The Operational Guidelines provide for structured, milestone-linked financial assistance to eligible E&P operators to share the capital risks associated with offshore exploration. Under the offshore exploration component, funding is envisaged for 60 wells, comprising 4 stratigraphic

wells eligible for funding up to 100% of the actual cost, subject to a ceiling of ₹1,350 crore per well, and 56 deepwater and ultra-deepwater wells eligible for funding up to 50% of the actual cost, subject to a ceiling of ₹675 crore per well. Any expenditure exceeding the approved funding limits shall be borne by the operator, and there shall be no automatic escalation of funding on account of cost overruns, delays or changes in scope.

The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons ("**DGH**") has been designated as the Central Nodal Agency responsible for implementation, verification and disbursement of funds under the Scheme. The Guidelines establish a governance framework involving the Executive Committee, Program Steering and Monitoring Unit, and the Technical Assessment Board, Data Appraisal Board and Infrastructure Appraisal Board. They also provide for milestone-based payments through the Public Financial Management System ("**PFMS**"), periodic monitoring and reporting, and the establishment of the Samudra Manthan Offshore Operations Monitoring System ("**SM-OOMS**") and a Single Window Clearance Portal within six months from notification of the Operational Guidelines.

The Scheme is scheduled to be implemented from FY 2027-28 to FY 2030-31, with FY 2026-27 designated as the preparatory year. The framework also promotes public-private collaboration, open-access common infrastructure and investment in domestic oil and gas manufacturing and services, with the objective of facilitating sustained operator-led investment in India's offshore E&P sector.

Operational Guidelines for Samudra Manthan scheme can be accessed *here.*

**MoPNG has invited comments on the Draft Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026**

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas ("**MoPNG**") has, vide notice dated 19.10.2026, invited comments and suggestions on the Draft Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Manner of Holding Inquiry and Adjudication of Penalties) Rules, 2026 ("**Draft Rules**"), framed under the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Right of User in Land) Act, 1962 ("**the Act**"), as amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026. The Draft Rules seek to establish a uniform and transparent procedure for inquiry and imposition of penalties for first contraventions under Section 15(1)(a) of the Act, consistent with the principles of natural justice.

The salient provisions of the Draft Rules are as follows:

(a) **Appointment of adjudicating officer** – An adjudicating officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India shall be appointed to conduct inquiries and impose penalties for eligible first contraventions.

(b) **Filing and preliminary examination of complaints** – Complaints may be filed by the Central Government, State Government, competent authority, corporation proposing to lay, laying or maintaining the pipeline, or any other aggrieved person or person having personal knowledge of the alleged contravention. Complaints must specify the alleged contravention, identify the person concerned and include supporting documents or other relevant material. Complaints filed by persons other than the Government, competent authority or corporation shall undergo preliminary examination within 45 days to determine whether sufficient grounds exist to proceed.

(c) **Show-cause notice and hearing** – The adjudicating officer shall issue a show-cause notice specifying the allegations and enclosing the complaint and supporting documents. The person concerned shall have 60 days from receipt of the notice to submit a written explanation, extendable by up to 30 days for sufficient cause and reasons recorded in

writing. A reasonable opportunity of hearing must be provided within 30 days of receipt of the explanation.

(d) **Conduct of inquiry and adjudication –** The Draft Rules provide for ex-parte proceedings if the person concerned fails to appear despite a reminder allowing a further 15 days to appear. Before imposing a penalty, the officer must record a clear finding that the contravention is a first contravention falling strictly within Section 15(1)(a) of the Act. A reasoned order should, as far as practicable, be passed within one year of receipt of the complaint, extendable by up to six months for reasons recorded in writing.

(e) **Determination and deposit of penalty –** Penalty shall be determined having regard to the nature and gravity of the contravention, any injury or damage caused, disproportionate gain or unfair advantage obtained, and other relevant factors. The penalty must be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India within 45 days of receipt of the adjudication order, or within such extended period as the adjudicating officer may permit for reasons recorded in writing. Failure to deposit the penalty may result in recovery as arrears of land revenue, subject to any order passed by the Appellate Tribunal.

(f) **Appeal and rectification –** An order of the adjudicating officer may be appealed before the Appellate Tribunal in accordance with Section 15B of the Act. The adjudicating officer may, within 30 days of the order, rectify clerical or arithmetical mistakes or errors apparent on the face of the record, after providing the parties a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

The comments and suggestions can be submitted by 20.11.2026.

The Draft Rules can be accessed *here*.

A-142, Neeti Bagh
New Delhi – 110 049, India
T: +91 11 4659 4466 O: +91 70 1100 2949
E: mail@neetiniyaman.com
W: www.neetiniyaman.com

Office No. 501, 5th Floor,
Rehman House Premises CHS,
Nadirsha Sukhia Street,Fort,
Mumbai-400001, India

Disclaimer: 'GATI-विधि: LAW IN ACTION' is for information purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion. Its contents should not be acted upon without specific professional advice from the legal counsel. All rights reserved.