फाइल सं./File No: j-01013/111/2026-Fy(T)

भारत सरकार/Government of India

मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्रालय

Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying

मत्स्य पालन विभाग / Department of Fisheries

*****

Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi
Dated 29th September, 2026

Notice for Public Consultation

Subject: Proposal for the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

1. The Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005 was enacted to establish the Coastal Aquaculture Authority for regulating coastal aquaculture activities. The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Act, 2023 further strengthened the regulatory framework through provisions relating to registration, aqua mapping and zonation, biosecurity, disease surveillance, regulation of aquaculture inputs, hatcheries and broodstock, and enforcement.

2. Aquaculture has expanded significantly across inland, coastal and marine ecosystems and plays an important role in food and nutritional security, livelihoods, employment, income generation and fisheries exports. Given the growing scale and diversity of aquaculture activities, a comprehensive statutory framework is required to promote sustainable and responsible development of the sector.

3. Accordingly, the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India proposes further amendments to the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005. The proposed Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026 seeks, inter alia, to establish a statutory framework covering all forms of aquaculture and allied activities in inland, coastal and marine areas under national jurisdiction; extend the Act to the whole of India, including the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and redesignate the Coastal Aquaculture Authority as the Aquaculture Authority of India.

4. The proposed Bill aims to provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable and responsible aquaculture, covering registration and regulation of aquaculture units and allied activities, aquatic animal health and biosecurity, regulation and certification of aquaculture inputs, disease surveillance and control, aqua mapping and zonation, environmental safeguards, traceability and information management, import and quarantine measures, inspection and enforcement, adjudication and appeals, and related matters. The framework is also intended to facilitate quality assurance and compliance with national and international requirements, including those relevant to fisheries exports.

5. The draft Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026 is enclosed as an Annexure for comments and suggestions from the public and stakeholders. Comments/suggestions may be submitted within 30 days from the date of issue of this Public Notice.

6. Comments/suggestions may be sent by e-mail (in MS Word format) to jsfy@nic.in. Alternatively, they may be sent by post to:

Dr. K. Mohammed Koya,
Fisheries Development Commissioner,
Room No. 242-C, Department of Fisheries,
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying,
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110 001
E-mail: fdc-india@dof.gov.in

The envelope may kindly be superscripted on the top with "Comments/Suggestions on the proposed Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026".

Encl. As above

डॉ. के. मोहम्मद कोया
Dr. K. MOHAMMED KOYA
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(Dr. K. Mohammed Koya)
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THE COASTAL AQUACULTURE AUTHORITY

(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

A

BILL

to amend The Coastal Aquaculture Authority(Amendment)Act, 2023.

Bill No. XX of 2026

THE COASTAL AQUACULTURE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

A bill to provide for the establishment of an Aquaculture Authority of India for regulating the activities connected with sustainable and responsible aquaculture and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

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

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Short title, application, extent and commencement -

(1) This Bill may be called the **Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2026**.

(2) This Act shall be applicable to all forms of aquaculture and allied activities in inland, coastal and marine areas under the national jurisdiction.

(3) This Act extends to the whole of India, including the Exclusive Economic Zone.

(4) Save as otherwise provided, it shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this Act.

1. Amendment of Section 1 (Short title and commencement)

1. In the principal Act, for the words **"Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005"**, the words **"Aquaculture Authority of India Act, 2026"** shall be substituted.

2. In section 2 of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority Act, 2005, (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in sub-section (2), -

(i) For clause **(a) to (q)** in Section 2 of the principal Act, the following clauses shall be substituted, namely:

a. **"Authority"** means the **Aquaculture Authority of India** established under sub-section (1) of section 4, responsible for the regulation, monitoring, and promotion of sustainable and responsible aquaculture and allied activities across India;

b. **"Allied Activities"** means any activity directly connected with or supporting aquaculture production, including broodstock development, seed production, hatcheries, nurseries, quarantine, feed and input supply, aquatic animal health services, diagnostics, live-animal transportation, harvesting, farm-gate handling, traceability and aquaculture-related infrastructure, but does not include processing, marketing or retail sale except to the extent specifically required for aquaculture traceability or biosecurity;

c. **"Chairperson"** means the Chairperson of the Authority;

d. **"Member"** means a member of the Authority appointed under sub-section (3) of section 4 and includes the Chairperson;

e. **"Prescribed"** means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

f. **"Regulations"** means the regulations made by the Authority under this Act;

g. **"Aquaculture" or "aquaculture activity"** means the rearing, breeding, and cultivation of any life stages of aquatic organisms, including finfish, crustaceans, molluscs, echinoderms, amphibians, aquatic reptiles, aquatic plants, seaweed, microalgae, all other organisms used as live feed, in any form or any other aquatic life under controlled or semi-controlled conditions, indoor or outdoor in freshwater, saline water (including inland saline water), or brackish water or marine across any geographic region in the country and other allied aquaculture production activities. Aquaculture can be commercial or subsistence in nature;

(ga) **"Operator"** means any individual, group of person(s) including cooperative society, self-help group, societies, firms, companies or any public/private entity that is engaged in the operation of the aquaculture activity;

(gb) **"Owner",** in relation to any aquaculture unit, includes-

(i) his/her legal heirs or agent; and

(ii) an operator, a mortgagee, lessee, including sub-lessee, or any other person in actual possession of such aquaculture unit;

h. **"Aquaculture unit"** means any facility, installation, or land-based/water-based structure that is engaged in aquaculture or any allied activity (as defined in "b" above) connected therewith, and includes a Nucleus Breeding Centre, Brood Stock Multiplication Centre, Brood banks, hatchery, nursery, farm, live feed unit, and quarantine stations;

(ha) **"Farm"** means an aquaculture unit (as defined above) where culturing of crustaceans, molluscs, finfish, seaweed, or any other aquatic life is done under controlled or semi-controlled conditions in ponds, raceways, pens, cages, rafts, enclosures, or advanced closed systems across freshwater, saline water, brackish water, or marine waters, and includes nursery rearing;

(hb**) "Total Farm Area"** means land area which is intending for aquaculture;

(hc) **"Hatchery"** means an aquaculture unit carrying on aquaculture activity of breeding, genetic selection, and seed production of fish, including crustaceans, molluscs, finfish, seaweed, or any other aquatic life, in any water type and in any geographic region, and includes rearing of larval stages, and live feed;

(hd) **"Bio-secured facility"** means an aquaculture unit carrying on aquaculture activity adopting such biosecurity measures for ensuring safety from disease causing pathogens as may be specified in the guidelines issued for such activity;

(he) **"Nucleus Breeding Centre"** means a highly bio-secured aquaculture unit carrying on aquaculture activity which has an established freedom from disease-causing pathogens for the purpose of producing domesticated, genetically improved, specific pathogen-free, specific pathogen-tolerant, and specific pathogen-resistant stocks including all Pathogen exposed stocks;

(hf) **"Brood Stock Multiplication Centre"** means a bio-secure aquaculture unit carrying on such aquaculture activity which receives eggs, larvae, post-larvae, fingerlings, or juveniles or any other life stages which are specific pathogen-free, specific pathogen-tolerant, or specific pathogen-resistant, all pathogen exposed stocks;

(hg) **"Brood Bank"-** means a designated facility or established stock of selected, healthy and genetically suitable brood fish maintained under controlled biosecurity and management conditions for the purpose of breeding and production of quality fish seed."

i. **"Aquaculture input"** means any material used as an input in aquaculture for the maintenance of quality of water and soil for the growth, nutrition, biosecurity, and better health of organisms reared, or other aquatic life available therein, and includes seed/germplasm; feed, feed supplements and feed additives; probiotics and minerals; aquaculture healthcare products and approved therapeutants; vaccines, bio-remediators, hormones, chemically active substances sanitisers, disinfectants and approved disease-control products;

(ia) **"Pharmacologically active substance or antimicrobial agent"** means a naturally occurring, semi-synthetic or synthetic substance approved by government agencies that, at in-vivo concentration, exhibits antimicrobial activity of killing or inhibiting the growth of microorganisms;

(ib) **"Specific pathogen free" or "specific pathogen resistant**" **or "specific pathogen tolerant"** means free of, resistant to, or tolerant to such pathogens as may be listed by the World Organisation for Animal Health or any other pathogen notified by the Central Government, which is specific to candidate species used in aquaculture;

(ic) **"Aqua mapping"** means geotagged spatial area distribution maps depicting areas with potential and suitability for all forms of inland, freshwater, brackish water, cold-water, saline water and marine aquaculture;

(id) **"Aqua zonation"** means the zones of spatial planning for different aquatic species, production intensities, or methods of aquaculture notified by a State Government, Union territory administration, or the Authority for sustainable aquaculture;

(ie) **"Biosecurity"** means any measures, strategy, or integrated approach adopted to analyse, manage, with/without physical facilities to prevent the risk of introduction or spread of harmful organisms, including viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, and invasive alien species, within the aquaculture unit and to minimize the risk of transmission of infectious diseases;

j. **"Aquaculture area"** means any land or other such waterbody, wetland, coastal zone (as declared as the Coastal Regulation Zone in the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification issued by the Central Government under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), and includes such other area as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify), designated for aquaculture activities under this Act;

(ja) **"Environment"** means the area of land, air, and water including the complete system of living organisms and physical surroundings therein, where aquaculture is conducted;

k. **"Germplasm**" means any living aquatic genetic resource or reproductive material of fish, shellfish or other aquatic organisms, including broodstock, fertilized eggs, eyed ova, milt, ova, embryos, larvae, spawn, fry, fingerlings, juveniles, tissues, cells or any other genetic material capable of being used for breeding, propagation, genetic improvement, conservation or aquaculture, as may be notified by the Authority;

l. "**Traditional aquaculture"** refers to low-input, extensive aquaculture systems that rely predominantly on the natural productivity of aquatic ecosystems, indigenous knowledge and management practices, with minimal use of supplementary feed, fertilizers or other external inputs;

m. **"Inland Saline Aquaculture"** means aquaculture carried out in inland saline or brackish waters wherein the salinity is above 0.5 ppt, including saline groundwater, salt-affected ponds, tanks, reservoirs and other inland water bodies situated beyond coastal tidal influence, for the farming of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic plants or other aquatic organisms;

n. **"Coldwater Aquaculture**" means aquaculture carried out in freshwater ecosystems characterized by low water temperatures and high dissolved oxygen levels, including raceways, flow-through systems, spring-fed channels, upland lakes, hill reservoirs and recirculating aquaculture systems, for the culture, breeding or conservation of trout, mahseer, snow trout and such other cold water aquatic species as may be notified by the Authority;

o. **"Freshwater Aquaculture**"- means aquaculture carried out in freshwater ponds, tanks, reservoirs and wherein the salinity of water remains below 0.5 ppt and other water bodies for the farming of fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic plants or other aquatic organisms

p. **"Mariculture"** involves the breeding and cultivation of marine organisms in seawater, enclosed sections of the ocean, or in tanks, ponds, or raceways filled with seawater. It may include but not limited to sea cage farming, Integrated Multitrophic Aquaculture, Recirculating Aquaculture System, culture of seaweeds, and bivalve farming;

q. "**Water Spread Area"** means the actual area of an aquaculture unit that is inundated with water during the normal culture operation, measured at the inner toe of the pond/tank bund or enclosure, exclusive of bunds, dykes, reservoirs, canals, office and staff areas, and approach roads," along with a simple, standard survey-based calculation method;

Words and expressions used herein and not defined but defined in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986) shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in that Act.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL POWERS OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

3. For section 3 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

The Central Government shall take all such measures as it deems necessary or expedient for the regulation of all forms of aquaculture by prescribing comprehensive national guidelines to ensure that aquaculture does not cause any detriment to coastal environment and marine ecosystems, inland water bodies including brackish water, cold-water, saline water, fresh water or the general environment. The concept of **responsible, sustainable and bio-secured aquaculture** contained in such guidelines shall be followed in regulating aquaculture activities to protect the livelihood of various sections of the people, including traditional fishers, farmers, and indigenous communities throughout the country.

CHAPTER III

THE AQUACULTURE AUTHORITY OF INDIA

4. For section 4 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint in this behalf, there shall be established for the purpose of this Act an Authority to be called the **Aquaculture Authority of India**.

(2) The head office of the Authority shall be at such place as the Central Government may decide, and the Authority may establish **regional offices across** as need be to facilitate nationwide regulation.

(3) The Authority shall consist of the following members who shall be appointed by the Central Government, namely: -

a. Chairperson who is, or has been, a Judge of a High Court;

b. Secretary of the Authority, ex-officio member;

c. One member who is an expert in the field of inland & freshwater aquaculture;

d. One member who is an expert in the field of coastal and brackish water aquaculture;

e. One member who is an expert in the field of marine aquaculture;

f. One member who is an expert in the field of coldwater aquaculture;

g. One member who is an expert in the field on environmental protection, ecology, or pollution control nominated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of the Central Government

h. One member to represent the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of the Central Government;

i. One member to represent the Ministry of Earth Sciences;

j. One member to represent the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Central Government;

k. One member to represent the Department of Fisheries- Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying of the Central Government;

l. One member to represent the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, -Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying of the Central Government;

m. One member to represent the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Central Government;

n. One member to represent the Ministry of Panchayati Raj of the Central Government;

o. One member to represent the Ministry of Tribal Affairs of the Central Government;

p. One member to represent the Ministry of Jal Shakti of the Central Government;

q. One member to represent the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology;

r. One member to represent the Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology;

s. One member to represent the National Fisheries Development Board;

t. Ten members appointed on rotation basis to represent the States and Union Territories, ensuring equal representation of inland and coastal states on a case-to-case basis;

u. Any other representative can be called as a special invitee (shall not be entitled to vote) with approval of chairperson.

(3A) When the office of the Chairperson is vacant, the Central Government may, till the appointment of a new incumbent to the said office, nominate any member of the Authority to exercise such of the powers, and perform such of the functions, of the Chairperson as may be prescribed;

(4) The term of office of the Chairperson and every other member shall be three years;

(5) The salaries and allowances payable to, and the other terms and conditions of service of, the members shall be such as may be prescribed (as per regulation).

5. **After section 7 of the principal Act, the following section shall be inserted, namely:**

7A. Committees of Authority

1. Subject to any rules made in this behalf, the Authority may from time to time constitute a standing or ad-hoc committees (including specific committees for Inland Aquaculture, Cold-water Aquaculture, brackish water aquaculture, Saline Aquaculture, Mariculture, Input Standardization, etc.) as may be necessary for the efficient discharge of its functions;

2. Every committee shall consist of such number of persons and perform such functions and be subject to such terms and conditions as may be prescribed;

3. Representatives of the State Government and industry may be included in the various committees proposed.

6. For clause (f) in Section 9A of the principal Act, the following clauses shall be substituted, namely:

(f) coordinating with the Central Government, State Governments, UT administrations and with the committees of the Authority;

CHAPTER IV

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF AUTHORITY

7. For section 11 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) Subject to any guidelines issued by the Central Government under section 3, the Authority shall exercise the following powers and perform the following functions, namely: -

(a) to make regulations for the construction and operation of **all types of aquaculture units** within the country;

(b) to inspect **aquaculture units** with a view to ascertaining their environmental impact, biosecurity status, and operational safety;

(c) to register aquaculture units nationwide;

(d) to order removal or demolition or modification of any aquaculture unit which is causing environmental pollution, biological contamination, or ecological destruction, after hearing the occupier of such unit;

(da) to regulate or prohibit the number, density, species, and methodology of any aquaculture activity in specific areas as may be prescribed, through planning and execution of comprehensive programmes, including aqua zonation and aqua mapping for environmentally biosafe aquaculture;

(db) to fix or adopt government approved standards, certify, monitor, regulate, or prohibit aquaculture inputs, including seed, feed, feed additives, probiotics, therapeutics, chemical remediators, bio-remediators or any other inputs for the prevention, control, and abatement of detriment to aquaculture, environment and public health;

(dc) to fix or adopt rigorous biosecurity standards, certify, monitor, and regulate aquaculture units, ensuring systematic implementation of disease surveillance to ensure disease free produce in such manner as may be prescribed;

(dd) to fix or adopt the environmental standards for the emissions or discharges from aquaculture units;

Provided that different standards for emission or discharge may be fixed for different types of aquaculture units having regard to the quality or composition of the emission or discharge from such units;

(de) to collect, digitize, and disseminate information in respect of matters relating to aquaculture;

(df) to regulate the import into India and quarantine of live aquatic animals and aquatic animal germplasm by way of granting such permits, and to prescribe measures for import risk assessment, inspection, testing, disease prevention and biosecurity, including measures relating to alien, exotic, invasive and genetically modified aquatic organisms and the prevention and containment of their escape, in such manner and form as prescribed;

(e) to issue, suspend, cancel or refuse import permits and quarantine clearance certificates in respect of live aquatic animals and aquatic animal germplasm, and to designate or authorise quarantine facilities, laboratories and officers for inspection, sampling, testing, quarantine and certification as may be prescribed;

(f) to perform such other functions as may be prescribed.

(2) Where the Authority orders removal or demolition of any aquaculture unit under clause (d) of sub-section (1), the workers of the said unit shall be paid such compensation as may be settled between the workers and the management through an Authority consisting of one person only to be appointed by the Authority and such Authority may exercise such powers of a District Magistrate for such purpose, as may be prescribed.

8. **For section 12 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:**

9. Subject to any rule made in this behalf, any person generally or specially authorised by the Authority on this behalf may, wherever it is necessary to do so for any purposes of this Act, at all reasonable times, enter any aquaculture unit and -

a. make any inspection, survey, biological sampling, measurement, valuation, or inquiry;

b. remove or demolish any structure or dispose of do such other acts or things as may be prescribed;

(2) Provided also that the owner shall be liable to pay the cost of demolition and cost of damage to the environment, if any, assessed under the Polluter Pays Principle in such manner as may be prescribed.

9. For section 12A of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

The Authority may, by an order, prohibit the use, in any aquaculture activity of -

a. such pharmacologically active substances, unapproved antibiotics, critical antimicrobial agents, or other toxic chemical materials which may cause harm to aquatic life, environment, or human health, as may be prescribed; or

b. aquaculture inputs containing such prohibited substances, agents, or materials as may be specified under clause (a).

10. For section 13 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

13. (1)(a) The Authority may, by order, authorise any officer of the Authority or the State Government or the Central Government, not below the rank of Assistant Director of Fisheries in a District to function as authorised officer to exercise such powers, to discharge such duties and perform such functions, as may be specified in that order;

(2) Save as otherwise provided in this section, no person shall carry on, or cause to be carried on, any form of commercial aquaculture, in any part of the country unless he has registered his aquaculture unit with the Authority under sub-section (5) or in pursuance of sub-section (9), as the case may be to be rephrased for 13 (1).

13 (1) (b) Save as otherwise provided in sub section 1(a) of section 13, no person shall carry on, or cause to be carried on, any type of aquaculture unless he has registered his unit with the Authority under sub - section (5) of section 13;

(2.) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1a) and (1b), a person engaged in aquaculture immediately before the commencement of this Act may continue to carry on such activity without such registration for a period of one year from that day, and if he makes an application for such registration under sub-section (4) within the said period, till the communication to him of the final disposal of such application by the Authority.

Provided that the Authority may extend the period of relaxation of registration beyond one year on a case-to-case basis considering reasonable grounds for such extension to be recorded in writing.

3.The registration is made under sub-section (5) or in pursuance of sub-section (9)-

(a)The registration for brackish water and saline water aquaculture farms shall be valid for a period of ten years. Automatic renewal for subsequent periods shall be done by the Authority provided that the farmer submits required information or documents to the Authority as may be prescribed;

(b) The registration for the hatcheries, BMCs and NBCs operating in coastal areas shall be valid for a period of five years and shall be renewable for subsequent periods upon the application made by the operator;

(c)The registration for fresh water aquaculture farms shall be done one time. However, any change in the aquaculture area or method or type of aqua practice would require the farmer to submit the updates to the Authority;

(d) The certificate of compliance for aquaculture inputs shall remain valid for a period of five years and shall be renewable for subsequent periods upon application by the manufacturer or supplier. On any change in the chemical composition of the certified input, the manufacturer or supplier shall inform and update the same to the Authority in the form and manner as may be prescribed;

(e) The registration for mariculture units and systems shall be co-terminus with the period of lease assigned by the concerned Authority. Automatic renewal for subsequent periods co-terminus with the extended period of lease shall be done by the Authority, provided that the farmer submits required information and documents to the Authority as may be prescribed;

Provided that the Authority may issue a **certificate of registration** for carrying on aquaculture on land or water bodies owned, allotted, assigned, or leased by the Central or State Government subject to such procedure and for such period as may be prescribed, but not exceeding the period specified under clause (a) or clause (b), as the case may be.

4. A person who intends to carry on aquaculture shall make an application for registration of his aquaculture unit before the Authority, accompanied by such fees as may be prescribed for the purpose of registration under subsection (5);

Provided that the subsistence aquaculture unit limited to such scale and water area or type of aquaculture or allied activity as prescribed shall be exempted from the requirement of registration under subsection (5).

5. On receipt of an application for registration of an aquaculture unit under sub-section (4), the Authority shall consider the application in the prescribed manner and, after considering the application, either register the aquaculture unit or reject the application;

Provided that the Authority shall not reject the application without recording the specific reasons for such rejection.

6. The Authority shall, after registering an aquaculture unit under sub-section (5), issue a certificate of registration in the prescribed form to the person who has made the application for such registration.

7. In the case of a coastal aquaculture farm or saline water aquaculture farm comprising more than two hectares of water spread area and any other coastal aquaculture unit, no application for registration to commence any activity connected with coastal aquaculture shall be considered under sub-section (5) unless the Authority, after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, is satisfied that registration of such coastal aquaculture unit or saline water aquaculture farm shall not be detrimental to the environment.

8(1). Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, -

a. No coastal aquaculture shall be carried on in the ecologically sensitive areas or the geomorphological feature;

b. no coastal aquaculture, except hatchery, Nucleus Breeding Centre and Brood Stock Multiplication Centre shall be carried on in the No Development Zone in the case of sea, and in the buffer zone in the case of creeks, rivers and backwaters;

c. no coastal aquaculture, except seaweed culture, pen culture, raft culture and cage culture activities shall be carried on in creeks, rivers and backwaters within the Coastal Regulation Zone.

Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall apply in the case of coastal aquaculture farms which are in existence on the appointed day and to the non-commercial and experimental coastal aquaculture farms operated or proposed to be operated by any research institutes of the Government or funded by the Government or authorized by the Government;

Provided further that the Authority may, for the purposes of providing exemptions under the first proviso, review from time to time the existence and activities of the coastal aquaculture farms and the provisions of this section shall apply to coastal aquaculture farms in view of such review

Explanation. —For the purposes of this sub-section, -

(i)“High Tide Line” means the line on the land up to which the highest water line reaches during the spring tide;

(ii)The expressions “ecologically sensitive areas”, “geo-morphological features”, “No Development Zone”, “buffer zone” and “Coastal Regulation Zone” shall have the same meanings as defined in the Coastal Regulation Zone notification issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986).

8(2). No inland/saline water/cold water aquaculture shall be carried on in ecologically sensitive areas, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, forest area or designated heritage geomorphological features;

Provided that all activities carried out under this Act shall be in compliance with the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, and rules framed thereunder. Nothing contained in this Act or the rules made thereunder shall be interpreted in a manner that creates any conflict or inconsistency with the provisions of the said Rules or permits any activity prohibited under them.

Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall apply in the case of aquaculture farms which is in existence on the appointed day and to the non-commercial and experimental aquaculture farms operated or proposed

to be operated by any research institutes of the Government or funded by the Government or authorized by the Government;

Provided further that the Authority may, for the purposes of providing exemptions under the first proviso, review from time to time the existence and activities of the aquaculture farms and the provisions of this section shall apply to aquaculture farms in view of such review

9. Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, any traditional coastal aquaculture unit which lies within the Coastal Regulation Zone declared by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment and Forest (Department of Environment, Forests and Wildlife) No. S.O.114(E), dated the 19th February, 1991 and is not used for coastal aquaculture purposes on the appointed day shall be registered under sub-section (5) by producing before the Authority, by the person who is the owner of such unit, the documentary proof of such ownership, failing which such unit shall not be registered under sub-section (5) and if such person after such registration does not utilise such unit, within one year, for coastal aquaculture purposes, the registration shall be cancelled by the Authority.

"(9)(2)(a) A community-owned, cooperative, traditional or customary aquaculture unit in inland or cold water areas shall be registered under sub-section (5) upon the applicant establishing lawful customary or collective use by documentary or other evidence recognised under any law of the State for the time being in force, or under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006; and the absence of an individual title document shall not by itself be a ground for refusal.

(b) Registration under this Act shall not create, confer or adjudicate any right or title in land or water.

(c)Seasonal operation, following a crop holiday, or temporary non-use for biosecurity, ecological restoration or climatic reasons shall not by itself be a ground for cancellation or for refusal of renewal."

10. A person who intends to renew the registration of an aquaculture unit made under sub-section (5) or in pursuance of sub-section (9) may make an application within two months before the expiry of such registration to the Authority in the prescribed form accompanied with the prescribed fees, and the Authority shall, after receiving such application, renew the registration and for such purpose make an entry with its seal on the registration certificate relating to such farm issued under sub-section (6)

Provided that the Authority may condone the delay in making an application for renewal, subject to payment of such late fee for renewal of registration as may be prescribed.

11. The Authority may refuse to renew the registration of an aquaculture unit under sub-section (10) if the Authority is satisfied that the person to whom such registration was made has failed to utilise such unit for aquaculture purposes, or without any reasonable cause has violated any provision of this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder, or any direction or order made by the Authority in pursuance of Section 11.

Provided that such refusal to renew the registration shall not be made without providing such person an opportunity of being heard.

Explanation 1. For the purposes of this section, "appointed day" means the date of establishment of the Authority.

Explanation 2.-For the removal of doubts, it is hereby declared that the expression "to renew the registration" used in sub-sections (10) and (11) shall be construed to include further renewal of the registration.

11. The Authority may vary, amend or modify the certificate of registration issued under this section, in such manner as may be prescribed.

12. In the event of the certificate of registration issued under this Act being defaced or mutilated or lost, the Authority may grant a duplicate certificate, on payment of such fee and in such manner, as may be prescribed.

11. For section 13A of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) The Authority may, by order, authorise any officer of the Authority or the State Government or the Central Government, not below the rank of Assistant Director of Fisheries in a District, to function as an authorised officer to exercise such powers, discharge such duties, and perform such functions as may be specified in that order;

(2) The Central Government may, by notification, authorise any officer of the Authority or the State Government or the Central Government, not below the rank of Under Secretary to the Government of India, to function as an adjudicating officer, to adjudicate the penalties imposed under this Act;

(3) The Central Government may, by notification, authorise any officer of the Authority or the State Government or the Central Government, not below the rank of Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to function as the Appellate Authority, who may affirm, vary, or set aside the order passed by the adjudicating officer;

(4) The adjudicating officer or the Appellate Authority shall, for the purposes of discharging functions under this Act, have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, while trying a suit, in respect of the following matters, namely:

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of witnesses;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of documents;

(c) requisitioning any public record or document or copy of such record or document from any office;

(d) receiving evidence on affidavits;

(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents.

(5) The adjudicating officer or the Appellate Authority shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of sections 345 and 346 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

12. For section 14 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) Where any person carries on aquaculture or traditional aquaculture or causes the aquaculture or traditional aquaculture to be carried on in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act or any rules or regulations made thereunder or any guidelines or notifications issued thereunder, an officer authorised under section 13A shall take all or any of the following actions, namely

(2) Subject to sub-section (1), the authorised officer may take one or more of the following actions, namely:

(a) suspension or stoppage of any activity in an aquaculture unit for such period and in such manner as may be prescribed;

(b) imposition of penalty as specified in the Table below;

(c) removal or demolition of any non-compliant structure;

(d) destruction of the standing crop therein;

(e) suspension or cancellation of registration for such period and in such manner as may be prescribed.

(3) The District Collector shall monitor and ensure timely action by the Authorised Officer as per provisions of subsection 1 of section 14 and provide necessary administrative support to the Authorised Officer to ensure implementation of sub-section (1) of this section;

(4) The District Collector shall also monitor and ensure timely action by the Authorized Officer on the directions given from time to time by the Authority or the officer authorized by the Authority

(5) Where the Authorised Officer fails to take action against violators within a reasonable time, the Authority or an officer authorised by the Authority may require the Authorised Officer to appear for a personal hearing. Upon consideration of the findings of the personal hearing, the Authority or an officer authorised by the Authority may recommend appropriate disciplinary action against the Authorised Officer to the Head of the Department;

Table of Penalties

Sl. No.	Aquaculture Unit / Input Type	Offences	First-time Offence	Second-time Offense	Third-time and Subsequent Offenses

1	Coastal Aquaculture farm/Aquaculture in Saline water aquaculture	Non-registration.	₹15,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	₹25,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	₹50,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.
		Non-compliance with provisions of the Act, rules, regulations, environmental standards, and notifications.	Not exceeding ₹10,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	Not exceeding ₹20,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	Not exceeding ₹40,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.
2.	Commercial freshwater/cold water fish Farms (Exceeding 2 Hectares or commercial cage and Pen culture/multi tank RAS/Biofloc /Raceway and other such aquaculture units)	Non-registration.	₹5,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	₹10,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	₹20,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.
		Non-compliance with provisions of the Act, rules, regulations, environmental standards, and notifications.	Not exceeding ₹3,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume,	Not exceeding ₹5,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	Not exceeding ₹10,000 per hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.
3.	Hatchery, Brood Stock Multiplication Centre, Nucleus Breeding Centre/Live feed units	Non-registration.	₹1,00,000.	₹2,00,000.	₹5,00,000.
		Non-compliance with biosecurity protocols, genetic regulations, or operating rules.	₹50,000.	₹1,00,000.	₹2,50,000.
	Commercial Mariculture (Seaweed cultivation and cage culture and other mariculture activities more than 6 units)	Non-registration	₹5,000	₹10,000	₹20,000
		Non-compliance with biosecurity protocols, genetic regulations, or operating rules.	Not exceeding ₹3,000 per	Not exceeding ₹5,000 per	Not exceeding ₹10,000 per

			hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume,	hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.	hectare (or fraction thereof) or per 100,000 litres of system volume.
	Freshwater Hatchery, Brood banks, seed rearing units, Live feed	Non-registration	₹25,000	₹50,000	₹1,00,000
		Non-compliance with biosecurity protocols.	₹5000	₹10,000	₹20,000
4.	**Manufacture, Import, or Sale of Aquaculture Inputs**	Sale or distribution of banned, adulterated, or unapproved inputs, or use of materials prohibited under section 12A.	₹50,000.	₹1,00,000.	₹2,00,000
5.	**Use of materials prohibited under Section 12A by the farms/hatcheries/BMCs/NBCs/live feed units**	Contraventions of the provisions of clause (a) or clause (b) of Section 12A	₹50,000.	₹75,000.	₹1,00,000
6.	Aquaculture inputs	Non-certification	Rs. 50,000/-	Rs.75,000/-	₹1,00,000
		Non-compliance to provisions of the Act, Rules, Guidelines and Notifications other than Non-Registration, including use of banned Antimicrobial Agents or Pharmacologically active substances	Rs. 25,000/-	Rs. 50,000/-	₹1,00,000

With regard to the range of penalties provided under Section 14 above for non -compliance, the quantum of penalties for different types of aquaculture practices and the seriousness of the violations shall be further classified by the Authority.

Provided that where the person liable to pay any penalty under this section fails to pay the same within the prescribed period, such penalty shall be recoverable as an arrear of land revenue in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Revenue Recovery Act.

13. For section 14A of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) Any person aggrieved by an order of the adjudicating officer may, within thirty days from the date on which the order is made, prefer an appeal to the Appellate Authority;

Provided that the Appellate Authority may entertain any appeal preferred after the expiry of the said of thirty days, but before the expiry of ninety days, if it is satisfied that the appellant was prevented by sufficient cause from filing the appeal in time.

(2) No appeal under this section shall be entertained by the Appellate Authority unless the appellant has at the time of filing the appeal, deposited fifty percent of the penalty payable under the order appealed against;

Provided that on an application made by the appellant in this behalf, the Appellate Authority may, if it is of the opinion that the deposit to be made under this sub-section shall cause undue hardship to the appellant, by order in writing, dispense with such deposit, either unconditionally or subject to such conditions as it may deem fit to impose.

(3) On receipt of an appeal under sub-section (1), the Appellate Authority may, after holding such enquiry as it deems fit, and after giving the parties concerned a reasonable opportunity of being heard, confirm, modify, or set aside the order appealed against, and-

(a) if the sum deposited by way of penalty under sub-section (2) exceeds the penalty directed to be paid by the Appellate Authority, such excess amount shall be refunded at the earliest to the appellant; or

(b) if the Appellate Authority sets aside the order imposing penalty, the whole of the sum deposited by way of penalty shall be refunded to the appellant.

(4) The decision of the Appellate Authority under this section shall be final.

14. For section 15 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

No court shall take cognizance of any matter under section 14 without a written complaint filed by an officer of the Authority authorised in this behalf by it.

CHAPTER V

FINANCE, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

15. For section 16 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

The Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, pay to the Authority in each financial year such sums as may be considered necessary for the performance of the functions of the Authority under this Act.

16. For section 17 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) The Authority shall have its own fund, and all sums which may, from time to time, be paid to it by the Central Government, and all the receipts of the Authority shall be credited to the fund, and all payments by the Authority shall be made therefrom;

(2) All money belonging to the fund shall be deposited in such banks or invested in such secure manner as may be decided by the Authority. The Authority may spend such sums as it thinks fit for performing its functions under this Act, including establishing Regional, Sub-regional, Desk offices and strengthening of the office of the Authority and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of the fund of the Authority.

(3) The Authority may spend such sums as it thinks fit for performing its functions under this Act, including establishing Regional, Sub-regional and Desk offices, national reference laboratories and digital single-window registration systems, and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of the fund of the Authority.

17. For section 18 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

The Authority shall prepare, in such form and at such time each year as may be prescribed, a budget in respect of the financial year next ensuing, showing the estimated receipts and expenditure, and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Central Government.

18. **For section 19 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:**

The Authority shall prepare once in every calendar year, in such form and at such time as may be prescribed, an annual report giving a true and full account of its activities across all states during the previous year, and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Central Government, and that Government shall cause the same to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

19. **For section 20 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:**

(1) The Authority shall cause to be maintained such books of account and other books in relation to its accounts in such form and in such manner as may, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, be prescribed;

(2) The Authority shall, as soon as may be after closing its annual accounts, prepare a statement of accounts in such form and forward the same to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India by such date as the Central Government may determine;

(3) The accounts of the Authority shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at such times and in such manner as he thinks fit;

(4) The accounts of the Authority as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India or any other person appointed by him in this behalf, together with the audit report thereon, shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government, and that Government shall cause the same to be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

20. **For section 21 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:**

The Chairperson and other members and the officers and other employees of the Authority and the Authority appointed by the Authority shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) (or corresponding provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023).

21. **For section 22 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:**

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Central Government or the Authority or the Chairperson and other members of the Authority or the officers and other employees of the Authority or the Authority appointed by the Authority or any person authorised by the Authority or any officer authorised by the Chairperson for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act or any rule or regulation or order made thereunder.

22. For section 22A of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

Any cost, environmental remediation expenditure, or dynamic penalty which is due and not paid as provided for by or under this Act shall be recoverable in the same manner as an arrear of land revenue.

23. For section 23 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, particularly regarding the transition of inland regulatory mechanisms from state-specific systems to this national Act, the Central Government may, by order published 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 such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of three years from the date of the commencement of this Act.

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

24. For section 24 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act;

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely: -

(a) the national guidelines under section 3;

(aa) the powers and functions of the nominated member under sub-section (3A) of section 4;

(b) the salaries, allowances, and terms and conditions of service of members under sub-section (5) of section 4;

(ba) the manner of constitution of committees under sub-section (1) of section 7A;

(bb) the number of persons in the committees, their functions, and terms and conditions under sub-section (2) of section 7A;

(bc) the manner of appointment and terms and conditions of the Secretary under sub-section (1) of section 9A;

(bd) the manner in which the Authority may regulate or prohibit the number, species, density, and method of aquaculture under clause (da) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(be) the certification of aquaculture inputs under clause (db) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(bf) the comprehensive structural manner of biosecurity screening, pathogen mapping, and disease surveillance under clause (dc) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(bg) the manner and form of import risk assessment, inspection, testing, disease prevention and biosecurity in respect of live aquatic animals and aquatic animal germplasm, including measures relating to alien, exotic, invasive and genetically modified aquatic organisms and the prevention and containment of their escape, under clause (df) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(c) the other functions of the Authority under clause (e) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(d) the powers of a District Magistrate to be exercised by the Authority under sub-section (2) of section 11;

(e) the rules subject to which an authorised person may enter any aquaculture unit under section 12;

(f) the other acts or things that may be undertaken under clause (b) of section 12;

(fa) the manner of assessment of the cost of demolition and the cost of damage to the environment under sub-section (2) of section 12;

(fb) the substances, agents or materials the use of which may be prohibited under clause (a) of section 12A;

(fc) the information and documents to be submitted by a farmer for automatic renewal of registration of brackish water and saline water aquaculture farms under clause (a) of sub-section (3) of section 13;

(fd) the form and manner in which the manufacturer or supplier shall inform the Authority of, and update, any change in the chemical composition of a certified aquaculture input under clause (d) of sub-section (3) of section 13;

(fe) the required information and documents to be submitted by a farmer for automatic renewal of registration of mariculture units and systems, and the manner of such submission, under clause (e) of sub-section (3) of section 13;

(ff) the scale, water area or type of aquaculture or allied activity for the purposes of determining a subsistence aquaculture unit exempted from registration under the proviso to sub-section (4) of section 13;

(g) the manner in which an application for registration of an aquaculture unit shall be considered under sub-section (5) of section 13;

(h) the format of the Registration Certificate under sub-section (6) of section 13;

(i) the procedures for renewal applications, fees, and condonation timelines under sub-section (10) of section 13;

(ia) the manner of varying, amending, and modifying the certificate of registration under sub-section (12) of section 13;

(ib) the fee and protocol for issuance of duplicate certificates under sub-section (13) of section 13;

(ic) the period and manner of suspension of production activities under clause (a) of section 14;

(id) the parameters for total cancellation of registration under clause (e) of section 14;

(ie) the period and manner in which any penalty imposed under table of penalties shall be paid;

(j) the form and time of preparing the annual budget under section 18;

(k) the form and time of preparing the annual report under section 19;

(l) the books of account and digital accounting standards in consultation with the CAG under sub-section (1) of section 20.

(m) any other matter which is required to be, or may be, prescribed.

25. For section 25 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1) The Authority may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, such regulations may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely: -

(a) The times, places, and virtual modes of the meetings of the Authority and the rules of procedure regarding transaction of business including quorum thereat under sub-section (1) of section 7;

(b) The terms and service conditions under sub-section (1) of section 9;

(c) The appointment of advisers under sub-section (2) of section 9;

(d) The structural engineering design, biosecurity layouts, water discharge recycling systems, and operations of aquaculture units under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 11;

(e) The requirement for registration under clause (c) of sub-section (3) of section 13;

(f) Generally, for the advanced and sustainable regulation of all forms of aquaculture and supply chains in the country.

26. For section 26 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

Every rule and every 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. If both Houses agree in making any modification or agree that the rule or regulation should not be made, it shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder.

27. For section 27 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted:

(1)Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (*v*) of sub-section (*2*) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986) or clause (*d*) of sub-rule (*3*) of rule 5 of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986, in the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification or the Island Coastal Regulation Zone Notification issued by the Government of India in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, in exercise of the powers conferred under the said Environment (Protection) Act, in the paragraph dealing with prohibited activities, after the last sub-paragraph, the following proviso shall be inserted and shall always be deemed to have been inserted with effect from the 19th day of February

(2) The said notification shall have and shall be deemed always to have effect for all purposes as if the foregoing provisions of this section had been in force at all material times and accordingly notwithstanding anything contained in any judgment, decree or order of any court, tribunal or other Authority, no coastal aquaculture carried on or undertaken or purporting to have been carried on or undertaken shall deemed to be in contravention of the said notification and shall be deemed to be and to have always been for all purposes in accordance with law, as if the foregoing provisions of this section had been in force at all material times and notwithstanding anything as aforesaid and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions, no suit or other proceeding shall be maintained or continued in any court for the enforcement of any direction given by any court of any decree or order directing the removal or closure of any coastal aquaculture activity or demolition of any structure connected thereunder which would not have been so required to be removed, closed or demolished if the foregoing provisions of this section had been in force at all material times.

Nothing in this Act shall derogate from the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, Biological Diversity Act, 2002, Wetlands Rules, CRZ Notifications and other applicable environmental laws

28. For section 28 of the principal Act, the following shall be substituted

(1) The provisions of sub-section (*1*), and the provisions of sub-section (*8*) of section 13 as amended retrospectively with effect from the 16th December, 2005 by the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Act, 2023, shall have and shall be deemed always to have effect for all purposes as if they had been in force at all material times, and accordingly, -

(i) notwithstanding anything contained in any judgment, decree or order of any court, tribunal or other Authority, any action taken or anything done or purported to have been taken or done in accordance with the said provisions shall be deemed to be, and always to have been, for all purposes, as validly and effectively taken or done as if the said provisions had been in force at all material times;

(ii) no suit or other proceeding shall be instituted, maintained or continued in any court for any action taken or anything done or omitted to be done in accordance with the said provisions; and

(iii) no enforcement shall be made by any court of any decree or order or direction relating to removal or closure of any coastal aquaculture activity or demolition of any structure connected therewith or relating to any action taken or done or omitted to be done in accordance with the said provisions as if the provisions of sub-section (*1*), and the amendments made in sub-section (*8*) of section 13 had been in force at all material times.
