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SECTION 3, SUB-SECTION (i)]

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the ____ October, 2025.

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2025

G.S.R. __ (E).—In exercise of the powers conferred under section 19 of the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 (32 of 2025), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:—

PART I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short Title and Commencement.—(1) These rules may be called the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2025.

(2) They shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.—(1) In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,—

- (a) “Act” means the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 (32 of 2025);
- (b) “Applicant” means any online game service provider, through any person authorised by it in this regard, seeking registration of an e-sport or online social game under the Act;
- (c) “Appellate Authority” means the Secretary to Government of India in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology;
- (d) “Central Government” means, unless otherwise specified,—
 - (i) for the purposes of Part II of these rules, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports or the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, as the case may be;
 - (ii) for all other parts of these rules, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology;
- (e) “Certificate of Registration” means the Certificate of Registration issued by the Authority in relation to an online social game or an e-sport under rule 16, as the case may be;

(f) “Grievance” means any complaint or representation made by any user to an online game service provider, either in writing or through digital or electronic means, regarding any act, omission, service, decision, or practice relating to the offering or availability of online social games or e-sports;

(g) “Grievance Appellate Committee” means the Grievance Appellate Committees established under rule 3A of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000);

(h) “material change” means any change in the manner of offering a registered online social game or e-sport, including a modification in features of the online game or its revenue model, which is reasonably likely to change the nature of such online social game or e-sport as an online money game or where there is any change in the manner in which money or anything recognised as equivalent or convertible to money is transacted for the online game;

(i) “online game service provider” means any person who alone or jointly with others, offers, operates, organises, manages or makes available one or more online games.

(2) Words and expressions used and not defined in these rules but defined in the Act and rules made thereunder shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Act and the said rules, as the case may be.

PART II

PROMOTION OF E-SPORT AND ONLINE SOCIAL GAMES

3. Recognition and Promotion of e-sport.— (1) Subject to sub-rule (2), the provisions relating to recognition and promotion of e-sport under section 3 of the Act, shall be administered by the Central Government through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, which may involve suitable measures as may be considered necessary for the purpose.

(2) The registration of e-sport for the purposes of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Act shall be done by the Authority in accordance with rule 15.

4. Promotion and development of online social games.—(1) Subject to sub-rule (2), the provisions relating to promotion of online social games under sub-section (2) of section 4 of the Act shall be administered by the Central Government through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, which may involve suitable measures as may be considered necessary for the purpose.

(2) The registration of online social games for the purposes of sub-section (1) of section 4 and clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 4 of the Act shall be done by the Authority in accordance with rule 14.

(3) An online social game may be offered or made available without a registration under Part IV.

(4) The Central Government, through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, may issue codes of practice or guidelines in relation to the categorisation of online social games for

recreational, educational, skill development, or such other purposes so as to ensure safe and age-appropriate social gaming content.

PART III

AUTHORITY ON ONLINE GAMING

5. Establishment of the Authority.—(1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may by notification in the Official Gazette appoint, there shall be established an Authority to be called the Online Gaming Authority of India.

(2) The Authority shall be a body corporate by the name aforesaid, having perpetual succession and a common seal, with power, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hold and dispose of property, both movable and immovable, and to contract and shall, by the said name, sue or be sued.

(3) The head office of the Authority shall be in the National Capital Region.

(4) The Authority may function as a digital office which, without prejudice to its power to summon and enforce the attendance of any person and examine her on oath, may adopt techno-legal measures to conduct proceedings in a manner that does not require the physical presence of any individual.

6. Composition and qualifications for appointment of Chairperson and Members.—(1) The Authority shall consist of the following Members, to be appointed by the Central Government, namely:—

(a) a Chairperson, *ex officio* in the rank of the Additional Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology or in the absence of an Additional Secretary, such other officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary designated by the Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology;

(b) three Members, who shall be Members *ex officio*, in the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India, to respectively represent the Ministries or Departments of the Central Government dealing with,—

- (i) information and broadcasting;
- (ii) youth affairs and sports;
- (iii) financial services; and

(c) two other Members *ex officio*, not below the rank of Director to the Government of India, out of which at least one Member shall have special knowledge of and experience in law.

(2) The Central Government shall appoint a Secretary to the Authority, who shall not be below the rank of Director to the Government of India, and who shall discharge such functions as may be assigned to her by the Authority.

(3) The Chairperson may call upon such experts as deemed necessary to assist the Authority in the discharge of its functions.

(4) The Central Government shall provide for allowances payable to non-official experts as per norms laid down by the Ministry of Finance.

7. Proceedings of the Authority.—(1) The Authority shall observe such procedure in relation to the manner of performing its functions and transaction of business at its meetings, whether conducted digitally or physically, and authenticate its orders, directions and documents and instruments in the following manner, namely:—

- (a) the Chairperson shall fix the date, time and place of meetings of the Authority, approve the items of agenda therefor, and cause notice specifying the same to be issued under her signature or that of such other Member as the Chairperson may authorise by general or special order in writing;
- (b) meetings of the Authority shall be chaired by the Chairperson and, in her absence, by the senior-most Member from the Members present during the meeting;
- (c) save as otherwise provided under these rules, one-third of the functional strength shall be the quorum for its meetings;
- (d) save as otherwise provided under these rules, all questions which come up before any meeting of the Authority shall be decided by a majority of the votes of Members present and voting, and, in the event of an equality of votes, the Chairperson, or in her absence, the person chairing, shall have a second or casting vote;
- (e) if a Member has any personal interest in any item of business to be transacted at a meeting of the Authority, she shall not participate in or vote on the same, and in such a case, the decision on such item shall be taken by a majority of the votes of other Members present and voting;
- (f) in case an emergent situation warrants immediate action by the Authority and it is not feasible to call a meeting of the Authority, the Chairperson may, while recording the reasons in writing, take such action as may be necessary, which shall be communicated within seven days to all Members and laid before the Authority for ratification at its next meeting;
- (g) save as otherwise provided under these rules, if the Chairperson so directs, an item of business or issue which requires a decision of the Authority may be referred to Members by circulation and such item may be decided with the approval of majority of the Members;
- (h) the Chairperson or any Member of the Authority, or any Member authorised by her by a general or special order in writing, may, under her signature, authenticate its order, direction or instrument.

(2) No act or proceeding of the Authority shall be invalid merely by reason of,—

- (a) any vacancy in or any defect in the constitution of the Authority;
- (b) any defect in the appointment of a person acting as the Chairperson or other Member of the Authority; or
- (c) any irregularity in the procedure of the Authority, which does not affect the merits of the case.

8. Terms and conditions of appointment and service of officers and employees of the Authority.—The Central Government may, by general or special order, provide such officers

and employees drawn by deputation from Ministries and Departments of the Central Government as deemed necessary for the efficient discharge of the functions of the Authority.

9. Powers of the Chairperson.—The Chairperson of the Authority shall exercise the following powers, namely,—

- (a) general superintendence and giving direction in respect of all administrative matters of the Authority;
- (b) authorise any officer of the Authority to scrutinise any application, intimation, complaint, reference or correspondence addressed to the Authority;
- (c) authorise performance of any of the functions of the Authority and conduct any of its proceedings, by an individual Member or groups of Members and to allocate proceedings among them.

10. Powers and functions of the Authority.—(1) The Authority shall exercise and perform the following powers and functions, namely,—

- (a) determine, either on receipt of an application from an online game service provider or *suo moto*, whether an online game is an online money game or otherwise in accordance with rule 13;
- (b) upon such determination, recognise, categorise and register online games in accordance with Part IV;
- (c) maintain and publish a National Online Social Games and E-sports Registry containing such details of all registered online social games and e-sports as deemed necessary by the Authority and a list of online games determined as online money games by the Authority in accordance with these rules;
- (d) inquire into any complaint relating to an online game that is prejudicial to the interests of users;
- (e) issue directions, orders to persons offering, organising or facilitating any online game, advertisements relating to online game and financial transactions or authorisation of funds towards payment for any online gaming;
- (f) issue guidelines or codes of practice in relation to offering online social games and e-sports in consultation with the concerned Ministry or Department in the Central Government dealing with the matter, as the case may be;
- (g) impose penalties as provided under the Act in the event of any non-compliance with any direction or order issued by the Central Government or the Authority or the agency under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Act, in accordance with Part VI;
- (h) cancel or suspend registration of any online social game or e-sport in accordance with rule 18 or rule 19;
- (i) entertain appeals from the decision of the Grievance Appellate Committee or references made to it by the Grievance Appellate Committee in accordance with sub-rules (6) to (9) of rule 23;

(j) coordinate with financial institutions, law enforcement agencies and other agencies of the Central or State Government, authorities or regulators for effective enforcement of the Act;

(k) issue advisories to further the objective of the Act;

(l) such other functions as the Central Government may vest on it from time to time.

(2) The Authority may, on a representation made to it by a person affected by a direction issued under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Act, or on a reference made to it by the Central Government, or upon receipt of an order from a court of competent jurisdiction modify, suspend for such time as deemed necessary or cancel such direction and, while doing so, impose such conditions as it may deem fit, subject to which the modification, suspension or cancellation shall have effect.

(3) For the purposes of discharging its functions under the Act, the Authority shall have the same powers as are vested in a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908), in respect of matters relating to,—

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person and examining her on oath;

(b) receiving evidence on affidavit;

(c) requiring the discovery and production of documents;

(d) inspecting any data, book, document, register, books of account or any other document; and

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

(4) While discharging functions under the Act, the Authority shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of sections 215 and Chapter XXVIII of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (46 of 2023) and every proceeding before the Authority shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of sections 229 and 267 and for the purposes of section 233 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023).

11. Appeals from the decision of the Authority.—(1) An appeal from the decision of the Authority in relation to the determination of an online game, registration of an online social game or e-sport, cancellation of a Certificate of Registration, or imposition of a penalty under section 12 of the Act shall lie with the Appellate Authority.

(2) Every appeal under sub-rule (1) shall be made before the Appellate Authority, within thirty days from the date on which the decision of the Authority is provided to the applicant in writing.

(3) The Appellate Authority shall, after giving the appellant a reasonable opportunity for making a representation in the matter, pass such orders thereon as it thinks fit after due consideration of the representation, including an order confirming, modifying or setting aside the decision or order appealed against.

(4) The Appellate Authority shall send a copy of every order made by her to the appellant and to the Authority.

- (5) The Appellate Authority may, for the purpose of examining the legality or propriety or correctness, of any decision, or order of the Authority, on its own motion or otherwise, call for the records relevant to disposing of such appeal and make such orders as it thinks fit.
- (6) While discharging functions under this rule, the Appellate Authority shall not be bound by the procedure laid down by the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908) but shall be guided by the principles of natural justice.
- (7) While discharging functions under the Act, the Appellate Authority shall have the same powers of the Authority as under sub-rule (3) of rule 10 and be deemed to be a civil court, and every proceeding before her shall be deemed to be a judicial proceeding as under sub-rule (4) of rule 10.
- (8) The appeal filed before the Appellate Authority, under sub-rule (1) shall be dealt with by her expeditiously and an endeavour shall be made by her to dispose of the appeal finally within thirty days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

PART IV

DETERMINATION, RECOGNITION, CATEGORISATION AND REGISTRATION

- 12. Application.**— (1) Any online game service provider intending to seek recognition and registration of an online game as an online social game may, of its own volition, make an application to the Authority in such digital form and along with such supporting details as may be published by the Authority from time to time on its website.
- (2) Any online game service provider intending to provide an e-sport, shall make an application to the Authority in such digital form and along with such supporting details as may be published by the Authority from time to time on its website.
- (3) The Authority shall seek such details from an applicant as deemed necessary for the purpose of registering an online social game under rule 14 or an e-sport under rule 15, including any or all of the following, as the case may be,—
- (a) name and contact details of the applicant, including relevant statutory registrations applicable to such applicant;
 - (b) name and detailed description of the online game intended to be registered;
 - (c) category under which the applicant intends the online game to be categorised for the purposes of section 4 of the Act, including for recreational and educational purposes.;
 - (d) age group to whom the online game is intended to be offered;
 - (e) revenue model, including revenue generation through advertisements, subscription or one-time access fee or any other revenue model that does not involve receipt of payments in the nature of a stake or wager;
 - (f) user safety features;
 - (g) internal grievance redressal mechanism; and
 - (h) such other details as may be deemed necessary by the Authority for this purpose.
- (4) Every applicant shall provide an undertaking in such digital form as published on the website of the Authority confirming that the applicant shall not undertake any activity which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force, including the Act.

- (5) The Authority may require the online game service provider to furnish such additional information as the Authority may call for at any time during the pendency of the application.
- (6) Upon satisfying itself on the basis of the details provided by the applicant and any other additional information, the Authority shall process the application for determination under rule 13.
- (7) Where the Authority is of the opinion that the details provided by the applicant at the time of submitting the application are not in correct form or manner, it may require the applicant, in writing, to furnish such details again within the timeline specified in such notice and such timeline shall be in addition to the ninety days under rule 14 or rule 15.
- (8) An application may be returned by the Authority, by order in writing with reasons thereof, including where the applicant has failed to provide adequate details necessary to make a determination under rule 13 or where the details provided by her are incomplete.
- (9) Upon expiry of the validity of the registration, an online game service provider of online social game may, and of an e-sport shall, make a fresh application in accordance with this rule for renewal.

13. Determination of an online game.—(1) For the purposes of clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 8 of the Act, the Authority may *suo moto* or on the basis of an application made to it under rule 12, make a determination whether an online game is an online money game or otherwise, having due regard to all or any of the following parameters, as the case may be, namely,—

- (a) whether the online game involves any element of money or other stakes by whatever name called, including payment of fees, deposit of money or other stakes, or making any purchase during game play at any point of time in the online game and such money is in the nature of a stake or wager;
 - (b) whether the payment of fees or deposits made by users is used as consideration for participating in the online game or is used as stake or wager or a consideration for winning;
 - (c) whether participation in the online game by a user is contingent on or a precondition for participation on a prior deposit of money or other stakes by such user;
 - (d) whether the online game for which payment of fees or deposits made by users provides for winnings, rewards, or payouts in the form of money or other enrichment which is redeemable, convertible to or can be encashed as money, at any point of time in the online game;
 - (e) such other relevant factors as may be deemed necessary by the Authority for such determination.
- (2) The Authority may require the online game service provider to furnish such information as it considers necessary for making the determination under sub-rule (1).
- (3) A determination whether an online game may qualify as an e-sport shall be made only with the Member representing the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports being present in the meeting and concurring, and in doing so,—

- (a) the Authority shall assess whether the online game meets the conditions under clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Act and if conditions, including the recognition of e-sports under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025) are met, the application shall be taken up for processing for registration as an e sport; and
- (b) where the Authority is satisfied, that all conditions clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Act, except sub-clause (iii) of clause (c) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Act are being met, it shall require the applicant to first obtain recognition under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025).

(4) Upon making a determination under sub-rule (1) that an online game is an online money game, the Authority shall,—

- (a) direct the online game service provider to cease offering the game immediately;
- (b) prohibit advertising, promotion, or facilitation of the game;
- (c) initiate such further action as may be prescribed under the Act, including action under section 14; and
- (d) publish on its website a list of online money games and such other associated details as deemed necessary relating to the online money game.

(5) The Authority may furnish the details of the online money games to the Central Government and such other officer or officers authorised under this Act and any other law for the time being in force.

(6) An online game which is determined to be an online money game in accordance with this rule shall not be recognised as an e-sport under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025).

(7) Where the determination under this rule was initiated *suo moto* by the Authority, the Authority may, after making a determination,—

- (a) in case of an online social game, inform the online game service provider that such online social game may apply for registration under rule 12;
- (b) where the Authority is satisfied in accordance with sub-rule (3) that the online game may be an e-sport, direct the online game service provider that such online game first obtain recognition under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025) as e-sport and thereafter apply for registration with the Authority in accordance with rule 12.

(8) Where the determination under this rule was initiated upon receipt of an application under rule 12, the Authority may, after making a determination,—

- (a) in case of an online social game, recognise and register the online social game in accordance with rule 14 and issue a Certificate of Registration to the online game service provider in accordance with rule 16;
- (b) where the Authority is satisfied in accordance with sub-rule (3) that it may be an e-sport and after evidence of the recognition of the e-sport under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025) is provided, register the e-sport with the Authority in accordance with rule 15 and issue a Certificate of Registration to the online game service provider in accordance with rule 16.

14. Recognition and registration of online social games.—(1) Upon receipt of an application under sub-rule (1) of rule 12 and where a determination has been made under sub-rule (8) of

rule 13 that the online game is an online social game, the Authority shall register such online social game within a reasonable time not exceeding ninety days from the date on which the application was first made under sub-rule (1) of rule 12.

(2) Where the Authority has made a determination on a *suo moto* basis that an online game is an online social game under clause (a) of sub-rule (7) of rule 13, and the provider of such game has made an application for registration under sub-rule (1) of rule 12, the Authority shall recognise and register the online social game.

15. Registration of e-sports.—(1) Where an application from an online game service provider is received under sub-rule (2) of rule 12 or in accordance with clause (b) of sub-rule (7) of rule 13, the Authority shall register the e-sport upon providing a proof of recognition of e-sport under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025) within a reasonable time not exceeding ninety days from the date on which the application was first made under sub-rule (2) of rule 12.

(2) Any time taken to obtain recognition under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025) in accordance with clause (b) of sub-rule (7) of rule 13 shall be excluded from the ninety-days under sub-rule (1).

PART V

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

16. Certificate of Registration of online social games or e-sport.—(1) Upon registering an online game as an online social game under rule 14 or e-sport under rule 15, the Authority shall issue a certificate of registration to the online game service provider with a unique registration number in relation to such online social game or e-sport.

(2) The Certificate of Registration issued under sub-rule (1) shall be valid and subsisting for such period up to five years as chosen by the online game service provider at the time of making an application, unless suspended or cancelled earlier under these rules.

(3) An online social game or e-sport shall not be represented, advertised, or offered as a registered online social game or e-sport without a valid Certificate of Registration.

(4) An online game service provider to whom a Certificate of Registration is granted under this rule may surrender the Certificate of Registration before the expiry of its validity in accordance with rule 20.

(5) The Authority shall maintain and publish a list of online social games and e-sports registered under these rules in the National Online Social Games and E-sports Registry, along with the names of their online game service provider and associated details.

17. Material change in nature of the online game.— (1) Any time after the receipt of a Certificate of Registration, the online game service provider shall inform the Authority, in such form and manner as the Authority may provide,—

- (a) in case of an e-sports, of any material change in the registered e-sport or change in the status of recognition of such e-sport under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025);
- (b) in case of an online social game, of any material change in the registered online social game.

18. Cancellation of Certificate of Registration of an online social game or e-sport.—

(1) A Certificate of Registration issued under rule 16 shall be liable to be cancelled where,—

- (a) there has been a material change in the online social game or e-sport for which the Certificate of Registration was granted which would make it an online money game; or
- (b) there has been repeated or continued violations of directions applicable to it under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Act; or
- (c) in case of an e-sport, the online game service provider has failed to provide information confirming the validity of recognition under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 within such timeline as specified by the Authority;
- (d) there has been a violation of the provisions of the Act or rules made thereunder or any other law for the time being in force relating to online social games or e-sports.

(2) The Authority may, *suo moto* or upon receipt of a complaint in relation to a registered online social game or e-sport alleging all or any of the grounds under sub-rule (1), —

- (a) where it is *prima facie* satisfied that there is adequate information with it that any or all grounds under sub-rule (1) are being met, initiate inquiry under sub-rule (4); or
- (b) where it requires further information to make an assessment, issue a notice to the concerned online game service provider setting out the grounds and, in case of complaint, enclose a copy thereof and allow the online game service provider with an opportunity to make a representation and submit such details as may be necessary in relation to the grounds within fifteen days from the receipt of the notice.

(3) Where notice is issued under clause (b) of sub-rule (2), the Authority shall, consider the representation and submission made by the online game service provider along with the complaint or non-compliance identified by the Authority *suo moto*, and,—

- (a) where no grounds for cancellation under sub-rule (1) are being made out, dismiss the complaint or, where cancellation was initiated *suo moto*, terminate proceedings; or
- (b) where it is satisfied that a *prima facie* case is made out, initiate an inquiry providing the concerned online game service provider with an opportunity of being heard and may include a fresh determination under rule 13.

(4) An inquiry under clause (a) of sub-rule (2) or clause (b) of sub-rule (3) shall begin within a reasonable time not exceeding fifteen days from the date of receipt of complaint under sub-rule (1) or representation or submission of details under clause (b) of sub-rule (2) and shall be concluded within a reasonable time and in any case within ninety days from such date.

(5) For the purposes of an inquiry under this rule, the Authority may require the person making the complaint, the online game service provider, or any person providing any service to the

online game service provider, to furnish such information as the Authority considers necessary during the inquiry in such form and manner as the Authority may from time to time publish on its website.

(6) Where an inquiry is initiated under clause (a) of sub-rule (2) or clause (b) of sub-rule (3), the Authority may, upon the conclusion of such inquiry, by order in writing,—

- (a) where no grounds for cancellation under sub-rule (1) are being made out, terminate the proceedings under this rule and where applicable, dismiss the complaint;
- (b) where there is non-compliance under the Act not covered under Chapter III of the Act, direct the online game service provider to remedy such non-compliance and demonstrate compliance to the satisfaction of the Authority; or
- (c) where it determines that the registered online social game or e-sport has undergone a material change and qualifies as an online money game, it shall,—
 - (i) cancel the Certificate of Registration;
 - (ii) initiate any or all of the actions as under sub-rule (4) of rule 13; and
 - (iii) direct the online game service provider, or any other person providing any service to the online game service provider in relation to such online game, including banks, financial institutions, or any other person facilitating financial transactions or authorisation of funds to do any act or refrain from doing any act in the user interest.

(7) Where the registration of an online social game or e-sport is cancelled under these rules, the online game service provider of such e-sport or online social game shall,—

- (a) not be eligible to avail of the support or incentives for promotion and development of e-sport or online social game envisaged under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Act or sub-section (2) of section 4 of the Act; and
- (b) be liable for action under the Act or the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025), as may be applicable.

19. Suspension of Certificate of Registration of an online social game or e-sport.—

(1) The Authority may, *suo moto* or upon receipt of a complaint in relation to a registered online social game or e-sport, suspend the registration of an online social game or an e-sport, by order in writing, where,—

- (a) an inquiry is contemplated under clause (a) of sub-rule (2) of rule 18;
- (b) a direction has been issued under clause (b) of sub-rule (6) of rule 18, which suspension shall remain effective till such time she remedies the non-compliance to the satisfaction of the Authority, and in case of non-compliance with the direction seeking compliance, she may be liable to penalty under section 12 of the Act;
- (c) the online game service provider has made a false or incorrect statement in or in relation to the application for registration under rule 12;
- (d) the online game service provider has failed to pay a penalty imposed under the Act or under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025), as applicable;
- (e) the online game service provider has not complied with the directions, orders, codes of practice or guidelines issued under the Act or under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (25 of 2025), as applicable;

- (f) in case of an e-sport, the online game service provider has failed to provide information confirming the validity of recognition under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 within a reasonable time; or
 - (g) there has been a violation of the provisions of the Act or rules made thereunder or any other law for the time being in force relating to online social games or e-sports.
- (2) Where a suspension order has been issued on any ground under clause (a) or clause (b) of sub-rule (1), the Authority shall review such order of suspension periodically and in any case every thirty days from the date of issuance of the suspension order was first issued and, —
- (a) where suspension order is issued in relation to clause (a) of sub-rule (1), it shall ensure that inquiry under clause (a) of sub-rule (2) of rule 18 is initiated without undue delay; or
 - (b) where suspension order is issued in relation to clause (b) of sub-rule (1), ensure that non-compliance is remedied within the timeline so directed and in case of repeated or continued non-compliance, it may proceed for cancellation as under clause (b) of sub-rule (1) of rule 18.
- (3) Prior to suspending a Certificate of Registration on any ground under clauses (c) to (g) of sub-rule (1), the Authority shall,—
- (a) issue a notice to the concerned online game service provider;
 - (b) provide the online game service provider with grounds for which the Authority believes the Certificate of Registration may be suspended in case of a *suo moto* proceedings or provide her with a copy of the complaint in case of receipt of a complaint;
 - (c) allow the online game service provider with an opportunity to make a representation and submit such details as may be necessary in relation to the grounds within fifteen days from the receipt of the notice under clause (a) in such form and manner as the Authority may from time to time publish on its website.
- (4) Upon receipt of the representation and submissions from the online game service provider under clause (c) of sub-rule (3), the Authority shall, consider the representation so made by the online game service provider, along with the complaint or non-compliance identified by the Authority *suo moto* and such other further information as the Authority may require the online game service provider, complainant or any person providing any service to the online game service provider to furnish, and —
- (a) where necessary, it may suspend the Certificate of Registration by order in writing; or
 - (b) where no grounds under clause (c) to (g) of sub-rule (1) are being made out, terminate proceedings under sub-rule (3);
 - (c) where there is non-compliance under the Act not covered under Chapter III of the Act, direct the online game service provider to remedy such non-compliance and demonstrate compliance to the satisfaction of the Authority, which suspension shall remain valid till such time the non-compliance is remedied to the satisfaction of the

Authority and in case of continued non-compliance, proceedings under rule 18 may be initiated.

20. Surrender of Certificate of Registration.— (1) Any online game service provider to whom a Certificate of Registration has been issued under rule 16 may surrender its license for any or all online social games or e-sports for which such Certificate of Registration has been issued by making an application to the Authority in such digital form as the Authority may publish on its website.

(2) A surrender of a Certificate of Registration under this rule shall not affect any liability or obligation accrued or proceedings initiated against the concerned online game service provider under the Act prior to the date of acceptance of such surrender.

PART VI

IMPOSITION OF PENALTY

21. Scope and manner of holding inquiry for imposition of penalty under section 12.—

(1) The Authority shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of the non-compliance as under section 12 of the Act.

(2) The Authority shall, *suo moto* or upon receipt of a complaint made to it from any person in the manner and upon payment of such fee as published on its website, issue a notice containing particulars of the alleged non-compliance together with all the documents to the online game service provider for the proceedings, fixing a date and time for further proceedings, which shall be digital in nature unless physical presence is deemed necessary.

(3) On the date so fixed, the Authority shall explain to such person or persons to whom notice is issued about the contravention alleged to have been committed in relation to any direction or order made under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Act and,—

(a) where the online game service provider admits to such non-compliance, the Authority shall record the admission, direct her to remedy the non-compliance and may impose a penalty as she thinks fit in accordance with the provisions of the Act and rules made thereunder; or

(b) the online game service provider may show cause why an inquiry should not be held in the alleged non-compliance or that why the notice alleging the non-compliance should be dismissed.

(4) The Authority, on the basis of the notice, other documents, and submissions, shall form an opinion as to whether there is sufficient cause for holding an inquiry or the notice should be dismissed and accordingly shall either by order dismiss the notice, or determine to hear the matter.

(5) If the online game service provider fails, neglects or refuses to appear, or present herself as required by sub-rule (3), before the Authority, the Authority shall proceed with the inquiry in their absence after recording the reasons for doing so.

(6) At any time or on receipt of a report of non-compliance from an aggrieved person, any Government agency, court of competent jurisdiction, or *suo moto*, the Authority, may get the

matter investigated through an authorised officer or class of officers of the Authority notified under section 15 of the Act.

(7) The Authority shall hear and decide each complaint within ninety days.

(8) If, upon consideration of the evidence produced before the Authority along with other records and submissions, the Authority is satisfied that the person offering the online social game or e-sport, as the case may be, has become liable to action under section 12 of the Act, the Authority may, by order in writing, specify the particulars as may be necessary for compliance with the order, and may, as the case may be,—

- (a) impose such penalty as deemed fit;
- (b) suspend or cancel the Certificate of Registration issued to the concerned online game service provider, where applicable, or
- (c) prohibit the online game service provider from offering, facilitating or promoting such games for such period specified in the order.

(9) While adjudging the action under sub-rule (8) or quantum of penalty, the Authority shall have due regard to the following factors, namely:—

- (a) the amount of gain of unfair advantage, wherever quantifiable, made as a result of the non-compliance;
- (b) the amount of loss caused to any person as a result of the non-compliance;
- (c) the repetitive nature of the non-compliance;
- (d) the gravity and duration of the non-compliance;
- (e) number of users affected, and the level of harm suffered by them;
- (f) whether the online game service provider or the person to whom the non-compliance relates took any action to mitigate the effects and consequences of such non-compliance;
- (g) whether the penalty being imposed is proportionate and effective, having regard to achieving compliance and deterring non-compliance with the provisions of the Act;
- (h) any other matter that may be relevant in the context of harm caused or likely to be caused to the user and the non-compliance.

(10) The Authority shall make available a copy of the order to the online game service provider or the complainant.

22. Recovery of penalty.—(1) The amount of any penalty imposed under these rules, if not paid, may be recovered as if it were an arrear of land revenue.

(2) The penalties collected under this Act shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India.

PART VII

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

23. Grievance redressal.—(1) Every online game service provider offering a registered online social game or e-sport, as the case may be, shall establish and maintain a functional grievance redressal mechanism for redressal of grievances from any user in relation to the online social games or e-sport offered by it.

(2) The Authority may issue guidelines or codes of practice regarding the grievance redressal mechanism relating to registered online social games and registered e-sport.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 notified under the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000) where an aggrieved user is dissatisfied with the resolution of their grievance by online game service provider, or where no resolution is provided within a specified time period, the aggrieved user may approach the Grievance Appellate Committee within a period of thirty days from the date on which the online game service provider has conveyed their decision in relation to the grievance or in case of non-redressal of grievances within the specified timeline, as the case may be in such form and manner as the Authority may from time to time publish on its website.

(4) The Grievance Appellate Committee shall deal with such an appeal expeditiously and shall make an endeavour to resolve the appeal finally within a period of thirty days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

(5) The Grievance Appellate Committee may, after giving parties an opportunity of being heard, issue appropriate orders, including corrective or remedial measures in relation to the grievances and where the Grievance Appellate Committee is of the opinion that the online game service provider has failed to comply with any directions issued by the Central Government or the Authority under sub-section (3) of section 8 of the Act, it may refer such non-compliance to the Authority for appropriate action for section 12 of the Act.

(6) Any user dissatisfied with the resolution of their appeal by the Grievance Appellate Committee may approach the Authority within a period of thirty days from the date on which the Grievance Appellate Committee has issued the order in such form and manner as the Authority may from time to time publish on its website.

(7) The Authority shall deal with such an appeal under sub-rule (6) expeditiously and shall make an endeavour to resolve the appeal finally within a period of thirty days from the date of receipt of the appeal.

(8) The Authority may, after giving parties an opportunity of being heard, issue appropriate directions, including corrective or remedial measures, and may impose penalties for non-compliance under the Act.

(9) The Authority shall establish and maintain a mechanism for the resolution of appeals from an order of the Grievance Appellate Committee under these rules.

PART VIII

MISCLELLANOUS

24. Repayment of user funds collected before the commencement of the Act.— (1) Any funds relating to online games due to be returned to users for which she was eligible prior to the enforcement of the Act and which are in the possession or custody of banks, financial institutions, or any other person facilitating financial transactions or authorisation of funds

prior to the enforcement of the Act may be remitted to the users and such remittance shall not amount to facilitation of transactions or authorisation of funds towards payment for any online money gaming service under section 7 of the Act.

(2) This rule shall cease to have effect on the expiration of one hundred and eighty days from the date of enforcement of the Act.

25. Preparation and furnishing of annual report.—(1) The Authority shall, as soon as may be, after the completion of each financial year, prepare an annual report giving a true and full account of its activities performed in the year.

(2) The Authority shall forward the annual report to the Central Government within a period of one hundred and eighty days immediately following the close of the year for which it has been prepared after adoption at a meeting of the Authority, be signed by the members and authenticated by the Authority.
