



Current Affairs of the Day

Drone rules aim to help start-ups, SMEs

The Civil Aviation Ministry has notified the Drone Rules, 2021, under which the weight of a fully-loaded unmanned aircraft system has been increased from 300 kg to 500 kg to include heavy payload-carrying craft for use in the logistics and transportation sectors. The rules will also cover drone taxis.

The Drone Rules, 2021

1. The key features of these rules include the development of drone corridors for cargo deliveries. An unmanned aircraft systems promotion council will be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime.
2. The new Drone Rules will tremendously help start-ups and our youth working in this sector. It will open up new possibilities for innovation & business. It will help leverage India's strengths in innovation, technology & engineering to make India a drone hub.
3. The rules were aimed at simplifying the procedures and reducing the compliance burden for drone operation.
4. The IT sector body, NASSCOM, welcomed the move, stating that it would enable start-ups and small and medium enterprises to create innovative-use cases and applications in various sectors such as e-commerce, agriculture, mining, healthcare, emergency response and logistics.

No security clearance

1. Under the new rules, no security clearance will be required before any registration or licence issuance for drones. The number of forms or permissions has been reduced from 25 to just five. No pilot licence will be required for operating nano drones and micro drones for non-commercial use.
2. The Director-General or an entity authorised by it, on the recommendation of the Quality Council of India or an authorised testing entity, will issue a type certificate for drones. No type of certificate, unique identification number, prior permission and remote pilot licence will be needed for research and development entities.



3. The import of drones will be regulated by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade. There will be no restriction on foreign ownership in Indian drone companies.

Digital Sky Platform

1. Importing and manufacturing drones purely for exports are now exempt from type certification and unique identification numbers. Manufacturers and importers will be able to generate their drones' unique identification numbers on the Digital Sky Platform through the self-certification route.
2. The online registration of all drones will happen through the Digital Sky Platform.
3. An interactive airspace map with green, yellow, and red zones will be displayed on the Digital Sky Platform. The yellow zone has been reduced from 45 km to 12 km from the airport perimeter. No permission will be required for operating a drone in the green zones and up to 200 feet in the area between eight and 12 km from the airport perimeter.
4. Safety features like 'no permission-no take-off', real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing, etc., will have to be notified soon. A minimum six-month lead time will be given for compliance.
5. A remote pilot licence holder enlisted on the Digital Sky Platform will only be allowed to operate a drone covered under the Rules. The training and examination will be conducted by an authorised drone school. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation will prescribe the training requirements, oversee the schools and provide pilot licences online.
6. Carriage of arms, ammunition, explosives and military stores and so on on drones has been prohibited.

'Will hear plea for life ban on convicted MPs, MLAs at length'

1. The Supreme Court has decided to hear "at length" a plea that convicted parliamentarians and State legislators, former and sitting, should be disqualified and banned for life from contesting elections to Parliament or Assemblies.



2. The Supreme Court said the plea raised a “vexed question” with “far-reaching ramifications and consequences”.
3. As of now, convicted politicians are banned from polls for six years.
4. The CJI Bench further said more special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) courts needed to be set up in places where more than 100 cases were pending “to ensure easy accessibility to the witnesses and decongestion of existing special/CBI courts”.
5. The court directed the Centre and the States to provide High Courts infrastructure facilities to set up new CBI courts. The order was based on the alarming pendency rate of CBI cases as per a status report submitted by the premier agency in a sealed cover in the Supreme Court.
6. The report showed that 121 cases against sitting and former MPs were pending trial in various CBI courts across the country. Trial in another 112 CBI cases against MLAs, present and former, was also pending. In fact, 37 CBI cases against MPs and MLAs were still at the investigation stage. The oldest of the 37 dates back to October 2013.

‘National priorities also key in CSR’

1. Businesses need not restrict their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure to local projects and must balance local area preferences specified in the law with ‘national priorities’, the Corporate Affairs Ministry said.
2. Paying for the overseas training of Indian sports personnel representing any State or Union Territory at a national or international level is the only instance where activities undertaken by firms outside India will be permitted as a CSR project.
3. The first proviso to Section 135(5) of the Companies Act says a company shall give preference to local areas and areas around which it operates, in its mandatory CSR spending.