

Drone Regulation

May 1, 2020

Context: Center has recently tightened the drone regulations

- In 2018, the Centre came up with the first set of norms Drone Regulations 1.0 for visual line-of-sight daytime-only and maximum of 400 ft altitude operations of Drones
- Ministry of Civil Aviation announced a scheme providing a window up to January 31, 2020 for voluntary registration of all drones and their operators.
- On successful submission of voluntary disclosure of possessing drone, a Drone Acknowledgement Number (DAN) and an Ownership Acknowledgement Number (OAN) will be issued online.
- Users will be required to do a one-time registration of their drones, pilots and owners. For every flight (exempted for the nano category), users will be required to ask for permission to fly on a mobile app and an automated process permits or denies the request instantly.
- A newly launched, first-of-its-kind national unmanned traffic management mechanism called the “Digital Sky Platform” – a live platform for registration of manufacturers and operators of drones. Work for the development and hosting of the Digital Sky Platform was awarded by the Airports Authority of India (AAI)
- This platform allows operators to apply for a Unique Identification Number (UIN) – akin to the registration plate of a car – that needs to be issued for all drones (with the exception of the smallest category), and Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit online for approval by the civil aviation regulator.
- A ‘National Counter Rogue Drone Guidelines’, that seeks to lay down measures to be deployed in response to

threats to vital installations from unmanned aircraft systems, which was in the works, is now expedited.

- India has a 'No Permission-No Takeoff' (NPNT) clause for aerial unmanned objects, which implies that a drone cannot be operated in Indian skies unless the regulatory permission is received through the Digital Sky Platform.
- The pilot also needs certification, requiring a remote pilot licence or an 'Unmanned Aerial Operator Permit' (UAOP) before operating a drone.
- The Centre's regulatory policy on the use of drones classifies them based on their total weight – 'nano' (up to 250 grams), 'micro' (250 g to 2 kg), 'small' (2-25 kg), 'medium' (25-150 kg) and 'large' (over 150 kg).
- The Digital Sky Platform regulates all drones in the micro and higher categories
- The Digital Sky Platform divides the Indian airspace into three broad categories – Red, Yellow and Green.
 - Red denotes "no fly zone" (includes airspace near international borders, vital assets like Parliament House, nuclear installations, major airports);
 - Yellow signifies airspace requiring Air Defence Clearance or Air Traffic Control clearance;
 - Green signifies unrestricted airspace zones. However, even for the Green zone, there is a need to get clearance from the Digital Sky Platform to commence operations.
- Foreigners are currently not allowed to fly drones in India. For commercial purpose, they need to lease the drone to an Indian entity who in-turn will obtain Unique Identification Number (UIN) and UAOP from DGCA.
- In January 2019, a white paper on drone policy 2.0 was released, that paved the way for wider application of drones such as beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS)

▪ **India's Draft Drone Policy 2.0**

- beyond VLOS and beyond the current limit of 400 feet.
- drone corridors to keep commercial UAS operations out of non-segregated airspace in which manned aircraft operate.
- droneports' to facilitate the landing and take-off of drones.
- maximum life cycle for drones
- drone Directorate within the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- night-time drone flights.
- It proposes 100% FDI under automatic route