Draft Civil Drone (Promotion and Regulation) Bill, 2025

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Why in news?

Recently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation released the Draft Civil Drone (Promotion and Regulation) Bill, 2025, and invited feedback from stakeholders and citizens until September 30.

- **Aim -** The new bill aims to promote and regulate the ***Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)*** in India.
- The draft bill seeks to replace the ***Drone Rules, 2021***, lays down a tougher regime for unmanned aircraft systems.
- **Enforcement Agency**- The ***Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)*** is responsible for carrying out the ***safety oversight and regulatory functions***.
- **Key Provisions**
- **Mandatory registration -** All drones must have a *Unique Identification Number (UIN)* issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- **Type certification -** Manufacturers need DGCA certification before selling or operating drones in India.
- **Compulsory third-party insurance -** All drone operators must have insurance coverage, which will be compulsory unless specifically exempted.
- **Digital Sky zones -** The existing "Digital Sky" platform will continue to classify airspace into three zones:
  - **Green zone** - Free flying is permitted.
  - **Yellow zone** - Requires air traffic control clearance.
  - **Red zone** - Operation is prohibited without prior permission from the central government.
- **Pilot certification -** Remote pilots must undergo training and obtain a valid Remote Pilot Certificate from a DGCA-authorized organization.
- **Mandatory safety features -** Drones must incorporate anti-tampering,

traceability, and airworthiness features.

- **Enhanced penalties -** Violations of drone rules and misuse of drones as weapons or for carrying dangerous goods are considered serious offenses, punishable with fines and imprisonmen.
    - Imprisonment for a period of ***up to 3 years or fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or both*** for violation of the bill.
- **Willful disobedience -** Whoever willfully disobeys any provisions be punishable with a fine up to *Rs. 50,000* or an imprisonment which may extend to 3 months or both, and
    - Any ***second or subsequent offence*** with a fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or an imprisonment which may extend to six months or both.
- **Exemption –** The bill exempts the UAS of the ***naval, military, air force or any of the armed forces of the Centre*** or the UAS ***weighing above 500 kilograms***.
- **Confiscating Authority -** The ***Director General or any other officer authorized in this behalf*** may seize and confiscate the UAS devices or things which may be useful for, or relevant to, the investigation of offence.
- **Cognizable & Non-compoundable Offence**– Any offence involving carriage of dangerous goods by a civil UAS or use of a civil UAS as a weapon, shall be ***cognizable and non-compoundable offence***.
- **Compensation for victims -** The bill proposes a compensation mechanism for victims of drone accidents, with specific amounts set for death and grievous injury.

References

1. Hindustan Times | Civil Drone (Promotion and Regulation) Bill, 2025
2. Ministry of Civil Aviation | Civil Drone (Promotion and Regulation) Bill, 2025

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