Drone Rules 2021

Why in news?

The government has notified the Drone Rules 2021 that is expected to make drone operations simpler for civilian drone operators.

What are the key features of Drone Rules 2021?

> "Drone" means an aircraft that can operate autonomously or can be operated remotely without a pilot on board

- **Relaxations**
  1. Number of forms reduced from 25 to 5.
  2. Types of fee reduced from 72 to 4.
  3. Various approvals that were required, such as unique authorisation number, student remote pilot licence, etc have been abolished
  4. No pilot licence will be required for operating nano drones and micro drones for non-commercial use.
  5. No security clearance required before any registration or licence issuance for drones.
  6. The Director General or an entity authorised by it will issue a type certificate for drones.
  7. Quantum of fees which was earlier linked to the size of drone, has been reduced and delinked from the size
  8. No restriction on foreign ownership in Indian drone companies
  9. Maximum penalty for violations had been reduced to Rs.1 lakh.
- **Digital Sky platform** will be developed as a single-window platform for the clearances
- **Airspace map** - An interactive airspace map will be displayed on Digital Sky platform that will show the three zones - yellow, green and red (Reduction of Yellow zone from 45 kilometres to 12 kilometres from the airport perimeter



- **Promotion**

1. Plans for development of drone corridors for cargo deliveries
2. Importing and manufacturing drones purely for exports are now exempt from type certification and unique identification number.
3. Manufacturers and importers will be able to generate their drones' unique identification number through the self-certification.
4. Type Certificate required only when a drone is to be operated in India. ***Nano and model drones (made for research or recreation purposes) are exempt from type certification.***

- **Coverage of drones** - Coverage of all-up weight of an unmanned aircraft system has been increased from 300 kg to 500 kg to include heavy payload-carrying drones for use in the logistics and transportation sectors.
- This will also cover **drone taxis**



- **Regulation -** An Unmanned Aircraft Systems Promotion Council will be set up to facilitate a business-friendly regulatory regime
- Import of drones to be regulated by Directorate General of Foreign Trade
- **Safety and security features**

1. Carriage of arms, ammunition, explosives and military stores, etc is prohibited.
2. No permission-no takeoff' (NPNT), real-time tracking beacon, geo-fencing etc. to be notified in future
3. Any accident involving drones should be reported within 48 hours
4. DGCA shall prescribe drone training requirements, oversee drone schools and provide pilot licences online.

No person shall carry dangerous goods on unmanned aircraft unless such operation is in compliance with the Aircraft (Carriage of Dangerous Goods) Rules, 2003

What is the significance of these new drone rules?

- Highlights the government's intent to allow the use of drones while at the same time ensuring security
- Sets the premise of trust and self-certification thus reducing the entry barriers
- Aims to make India a drone hub by 2030
- Aims to trigger a revolution in logistics & transportation sector along with other sectors like agriculture, healthcare, etc.

Source: The Indian Express, Livemint

