

Private players can use drones for delivery purposes in accordance with Drone Rules, 2021

Provisional list of 23 PLI beneficiaries released on 6th July 2022

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Drones offer tremendous benefits to almost all sectors of the economy. These include - agriculture, vaccine delivery, surveillance, search and rescue, transportation, mapping, defence and law enforcement to name a few. The Government is utilising services of drone service providers for vaccine delivery, inspection of oil pipelines and power transmission lines, anti-locust operations, agricultural spraying, survey of mines, land mapping under SVAMITVA scheme for issuance of digital property cards, etc. Many of these have been in remote areas of the country. Private players are free to use drones for delivery purposes subject to compliance with Drone Rules, 2021.

In September, 2021, the Government notified the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to promote the growth of drone manufacturing by private companies. The scheme provides for an incentive of Rs 120 crores, spread over three financial years. The PLI rate is 20% of the value addition over three financial years. PLI for a manufacturer shall be capped at 25% of total annual outlay. A provisional list of 23 PLI beneficiaries was released on 6th July 2022. The beneficiaries include 12 manufacturers of drones and 11 manufacturers of drone components.

The Drones Rules, 2021 notified on 25 August 2021 provide the necessary regulatory framework for commercial use of drones. These rules cover various aspects like type certification, registration and operation of drones, airspace restrictions, research, development and testing of drones, training and licensing, offences and penalties etc.

The key aspects of the regulatory framework under Drones Rules, 2021 are as follows:

- (i) Every drone, except for those meant for research, development and testing purposes, is required to be registered and should have a Unique Identification Number (UIN).
- (ii) An airspace map of the country segregating the entire airspace into red, yellow and green zones is available on the digital sky platform. Operation of drones in red and yellow zones is subject to the approval of the Central Government and the concerned Air Traffic Control (ATC) authority respectively. No approval is required for operation of drones in green zones.
- (iii) The State Government, the Union Territory Administration and Law enforcement agencies have been empowered under the Rules to declare a temporary red zone for a specified period.
- (iv) Drones are required to have the necessary type certification issued by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). No type certification is however required in case of nano drones (up to 250 gram all-up weight) and model drones made for research and recreation purpose.
- (v) The owner and operators of drones are required to furnish the necessary personal details including their Indian passport number etc. for issuance of any registration or licence.

(vi) Rule 17 of the Drone Rules, 2021, lays down the provision of transfer of drone to another person by way of sale, lease, gift or any other mode, after providing requisite details of the transferor, transferee and unique identification number of the drone on the digital sky platform along with the applicable fees.

(vii) Authorisation of Remote Pilot Training Organisations (RPTO) will be done by DGCA within specified time limits.

(viii) Drone operations that violate the provisions of the Drone Rules, 2021 are punishable under Rule 49 of the Drone Rules, 2021 as well as provisions of any other law, for the time being in force.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Civil Aviation Gen. (Dr) V. K. Singh (Retd) in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

YB/DNS

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