



NPNT Compliance: Drone Operations

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Why in News

Recently, the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** has granted permits to "**No-Permission-No-Takeoff**" (NPNT) compliant drone operations at **34 additional green zones** to **facilitate, smoothen, and promote** drone operations in the country.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - **NPNT is a software program** that enables every Remotely Piloted Aircraft (except Nano) to obtain a valid permission through **DigitalSky platform** before operating in India.
 - **Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA)** is defined as an Unmanned Aircraft (UA), which is piloted from a remote pilot station. Drone is a layman terminology for UA.
 - **DigitalSky is a Ministry of Civil Aviation initiative**, a highly secure and scalable platform which supports technology frameworks such as NPNT designed for **enabling flight permission digitally and managing Unmanned Aircraft operations and traffic efficiently**.
 - If a NPNT compliant drone tries to breach geo-fencing (to go beyond the permissible boundary in the airspace), the in-built software will compel the drone to return-to-home (RTH).
 - Drone flights in the green zone sites **shall be compliant with the applicable conditions of Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2021**.
 - **Flying in the 'green-zones' require only intimation of the time and location** of the flights.
 - Permissions are required for flying in 'yellow zones' and flights are not allowed in the 'red zones'.

- **Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Rules, 2021:**
 - **UAS categorised as airplane, rotorcraft and hybrid** with further categorisation as remotely piloted aircraft, model remotely piloted aircraft and autonomous unmanned aircraft system.
 - **UA is classified as nano, micro, small, medium and large unmanned aircraft** based on the maximum all up weight.
 - **Mandatory for individuals and companies to obtain approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** to import, manufacture, trade, own or operate drones.
 - **No Permission- No Take-off (NPNT) policy** adopted for all UAS except for those in the nano category.
 - Micro and small UAS are not permitted from flying above 60m and 120m, respectively.
 - **UAS prohibited from flying in strategic and sensitive locations**, including near airports, defence airports, border areas, military installations/facilities and areas earmarked as strategic locations/vital installations by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - Research and development (R&D) organisations, including start-ups, authorised UAS manufacturers, any accredited recognised institution of higher education located in India, are **permitted to carry out R&D of UAS** only after obtaining authorisation from the DGCA.
 - **Penalties** ranging between **rupees ten thousand and one lakh for individuals**, and for **organisations, a 200, 300 and 400% of the amount specified for individuals**, based on the size of the organisation.