

# **THE NEW EDGE AVIATION**

## **Recent developments regarding drones in India**

The widening possibilities for which UAVs can be used thanks to their flexible and rapidly evolving software and hardware, has led to their employment in a variety of fields. Some examples are:

- A specialized force constituted “for the purpose of specialist response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster” has been using UAS for locating victims of natural disasters.
- Indian Railways is using UAS for inspection and 3D mapping to bring to life its vision of a dedicated freight corridor with a network of 3,360 km. The entire corridor will be mapped using UAS technology.
- In November 2019, Coal India used drones to check illegal mining and pilferage, a system which it had already tested in a pilot project.
- An autonomous agency of the Government of India, responsible for management of a network of National Highways has employed the use of drones for 3D digital mapping for Detailed Project Report (DPR) for road widening of the Raebareli – Allahabad Highway.

Though both the industry and the market in India are at a very nascent stage, there is an immense potential for growth in both. According to 6Wresearch, UAV market in India is projected to grow at a CAGR of 18% during the period from 2017 to 2023.

Recently, the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued draft guidelines on UAS through a circular titled “Requirements for Operation of Civil Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS).” This policy proposes that for operations at or above 200ft above ground level (AGL) in an uncontrolled airspace, the Unmanned Air Operator shall be required to file a flight plan and obtain necessary clearances with the concerned Air Traffic Services (ATS) unit. However, many applications such as those in power and utilities require greater room for mobility; many transmission towers have a height of up to 350 feet. Therefore, it is felt within the industry that a limit of 400 feet AGL is a more practical threshold than the current 200 feet level.

Another issue that must be addressed within the industry is that of bringing it in line with the national policy to promote the ease of doing business. Currently, the mechanism of a single window has not been implemented and users are required to approach multiple government agencies such as the Wireless Planning & Coordination Wing, the Ministry

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of Home Affairs, local police units and ATS providers to take approvals and get clearances

### **Conclusion**

The usage of UAVs is only going to increase as the technology itself gets more advanced as well as accessible to the average consumer. Today, drones are already employed by those who can afford them to blog, vlog and create documents, both for personal and business use. In the current scenario, governments and large private companies like Amazon are exploring the possibilities drones offer in terms of recon, surveying, deliveries and so forth. Should regulations allow the nascent Indian industry, it may well grow rapidly and become vital components of fields such as transport, security, mapping and numerous other productive purposes.