

USE DRONES MORE EFFECTIVELY: CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRY

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Defence related developments

In a nationwide programme to take the third eye to the sky, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has called for more effective utilisation of drone applications and urged the Ministry of Home Affairs to deploy unmanned aerial vehicles for surveillance, situational analysis, crime control, VVIP security, disaster management, etc.

In a note sent to at least a dozen Ministries, the Secretary, MoCA, Rajiv Bansal, said drones offered tremendous benefits to almost every sector of the economy, including but not limited to, national defence, agriculture, law enforcement, and mapping, among others.

As part of the initiatives to make India a global hub for drones under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and in the backdrop of the Union government rolling out the liberalised Drone Rules 2021, he suggested the heads of various Ministries promote effective use of the technology.

The suggestions include deployment of drones for combat, communication in remote areas, counter-drone solutions, etc., by the Ministry of Defence; and delivery of medicines, collection of samples from remote or epidemic/pandemic-affected areas by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Acting on the recommendations that unmanned aerial vehicles could be used to undertake disaster management, incidence response, inspection/maintenance works and project monitoring, the Ministry of Railways wrote to General Managers across its network to implement the ideas, sources in the Railways said, adding that the Principal Chief Security Commissioner, Western Railway, had been nominated as the nodal officer to co-ordinate with the Aviation Ministry for guidance and support.

Real-time surveillance

The Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Power Ministries, have been asked to fly drones for real-time surveillance of assets and transmission lines, theft prevention, visual inspection/maintenance, construction planning and management, etc. Drone operations suggested for the Environment, Forests and Climate Change Ministry include anti-poaching actions, monitoring of forests and wildlife, pollution assessment, and evidence gathering.

High-quality videography

As a complete replacement to expensive helicopter-based videography, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting could use drones for high-quality videography of events and difficult-to-reach-places at a fraction of the cost and approvals required. This move would also facilitate low altitude shooting without noise, and prevent dust pollution.

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