

Indian Army's Drone Integration Post-Operation Sindoor: Bhairav Battalions, Rudra Brigades, and Modernisation Plan

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Indian Army Drone Integration Latest News

- The Indian Army is planning a major organisational overhaul that will integrate **UAVs and counter-UAV systems as standard battalion-level assets across most units.**
- The restructuring will also include the formation of light commando battalions, integrated brigades, and specialised artillery regiments and batteries, aimed at enhancing operational capabilities for future warfare scenarios.

Drones at the Centre of India's Modern Warfare Strategy

- India's military doctrine is increasingly centred around drone warfare, powered by domestic R&D advancements and proactive policy reforms.

- Since 2021, the ban on imported drones and the launch of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme have accelerated indigenous drone innovation, laying the groundwork for AI-driven autonomous drones.
 - The **PLI Scheme for drones and drone components**, notified in September 2021, allocated ₹120 crores over three financial years (2021-22 to 2023-24).
 - It incentivised domestic production and fostering technological advancements in the drone sector.
- The future lies in autonomous drones with AI-driven decision-making, and India is already laying the groundwork.

Dedicated Drone Units at Battalion Level

- In the wake of Operation Sindoor following the Pahalgam terror attack, the Indian Army is undertaking a significant organisational overhaul to enhance combat readiness for future warfare.
- A key focus is the integration of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and counter-UAV systems as standard weapon systems at the battalion level across infantry, armoured, and artillery units.
 - Currently, drones are used as secondary assets, operated by personnel diverted from primary roles.
- The new structure will create dedicated UAV operating teams within each unit, ensuring focused training and deployment.
- Infantry battalions will incorporate surveillance drones at platoon and company levels, requiring the reassignment of approximately 70 personnel per unit for drone operations.

Institutionalising Drone Procurement and Supply Chains

- A key objective is to incorporate drones and next-generation equipment as standard issue items for combat arms.
- This move will streamline procurement processes, establish dedicated supply chains, and reduce reliance on ad hoc or emergency purchases, ensuring sustained capability development.

Formation of Bhairav Light Commando Battalions

- The Army plans to raise 30 light commando battalions, called Bhairav, each comprising 250 specially trained soldiers.
- These units will have mission-specific roles and will be deployed under various commands to enhance rapid strike capabilities.
- The first battalions are expected to be operational within a month.

Creation of Integrated Rudra Brigades

- To enhance battlefield autonomy, the Army will restructure existing brigades into **Rudra Brigades** — integrated formations combining infantry, armour, artillery, UAVs, and logistics elements.
- These brigades will be capable of **independent operations across diverse terrains** and tailored for both conventional and hybrid warfare scenarios.

Artillery Modernisation: Drone Batteries and Divyastra Units

- Artillery regiments will see the establishment of two expanded gun batteries and a third drone battery equipped with surveillance and combat drones.
- **New Divyastra artillery batteries** will be formed, integrating long-range guns, loitering munitions, and anti-drone systems for deep-strike capabilities and area defence.

Enhancements in Armoured, Mechanised Infantry and Engineers

- The reorganisation will include upgrading reconnaissance platoons in armoured and mechanised infantry units with surveillance and strike drones.
- Discussions are ongoing to convert one company per battalion into a drone-centric unit.
- Engineer regiments will integrate drone sections for mine detection, area mapping, and reconnaissance.

Boosting UAV Capabilities in Army Aviation & EME

- The Army Aviation Corps will be strengthened with additional UAVs to reduce dependence on helicopters for reconnaissance and surveillance missions.
- Simultaneously, the Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) will enhance its drone repair infrastructure at corps zone workshops.

Source: IE | PIB

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/indian-armys-drone-integration-post-operation-sindoor-bhairav-battalions-rudra-brigades-and-modernisation-plan/>

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