

Drones, Brigades, and Bhairav

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Drones, Brigades, and Bhairav: India's Military Transformation

Context

The nature of warfare is rapidly evolving with technological advancements playing a decisive role in shaping military strategies. In this backdrop, the **Indian Army is undergoing a major organisational overhaul** aimed at incorporating **modern warfare tools**, particularly **Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)**, into its core operational framework.

Introduction

The Indian Army is set to implement a **comprehensive restructuring plan** to enhance combat readiness and operational efficiency in future warfare scenarios. A central aspect of this plan involves the **standard integration of drones and counter-drone systems** across all combat units. This reform is not only a technological shift but also a structural and strategic transformation.

Key Features of the Organisational Overhaul

Integration of UAVs and Counter-UAV Systems

- UAVs and anti-drone technologies will become **standard assets at the battalion level** across infantry, artillery, and armoured units
- Existing practice of assigning drone tasks to general personnel will be replaced with **dedicated UAV teams** trained for focused operations
- Each **infantry battalion** will have drones deployed at **platoon and company levels**, requiring reassignment of approximately **70 personnel per unit**

Emphasis on Indigenous Drone Development

- Since **2021**, India has **banned the import of drones** and launched the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme** for drones and their components
- The scheme allocated **₹120 crore** over **three financial years (2021-22 to 2023-24)** to promote indigenous innovation
- The focus is on developing **AI-driven autonomous drones**, making drone warfare a key pillar of India's military doctrine

Dedicated Drone Units and Institutional Procurement

- Dedicated drone teams will handle drone operations instead of ad hoc assignments
- Drones will be **institutionalised as standard combat equipment**
- Dedicated **procurement channels and supply chains** will replace emergency acquisitions, ensuring **sustained capability development**

Formation of Bhairav Light Commando Battalions

- The Army will raise **30 Bhairav Light Commando Battalions**, each with **250 specially trained soldiers**
- These battalions will have **mission-specific roles** and will be deployed under different commands to enable **rapid strike capabilities**
- The **first units** are expected to be operational within **one month**

Creation of Integrated Rudra Brigades

- The Army will restructure existing brigades into **Rudra Brigades**—combined formations consisting of **infantry, armour, artillery, UAVs, and logistics elements**
 - These brigades will be capable of **independent and autonomous operations**
 - They will be suited for both **conventional and hybrid warfare**, adaptable to **diverse terrain**
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Artillery Modernisation and Divyastra Batteries

- Each artillery regiment will include **two expanded gun batteries** and **one drone battery** equipped with surveillance and combat drones
 - Introduction of **Divyastra batteries**, integrating:
 - **Long-range artillery guns**
 - **Loitering munitions**
 - **Anti-drone systems**
 - These units will be equipped for **deep-strike missions** and **area defence operations**
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Upgrades in Armoured, Mechanised, and Engineer Units

- Reconnaissance platoons in armoured and mechanised units will be equipped with **surveillance and strike drones**
 - Discussions are ongoing to **convert one company per battalion into drone-centric units**
 - Engineer regiments will include drone sections for **mine detection, terrain mapping, and reconnaissance**
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Enhancement of UAV Infrastructure in Army Aviation and EME Corps

- **Army Aviation Corps** will receive additional UAVs, reducing reliance on helicopters for reconnaissance
 - The **Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) Corps** will expand its **drone maintenance infrastructure** at the corps zone level, ensuring operational sustainability
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Conclusion

The Indian Army's structural transformation marks a decisive shift towards **technology-led warfare**, with drones forming the **core of modern military operations**. By integrating **AI-driven systems**, **institutionalising drone procurement**, and creating **specialised units**, the Army is enhancing its preparedness for future conflicts. These reforms reflect India's growing emphasis on **self-reliance**, **indigenous innovation**, and **modern military doctrine**.



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