

Tata arm joins hands with DroneAcharya to train pilots

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The attacks on multiple Israeli civilian and military targets by the Gaza-based Islamist militant group, Hamas, are only the most recent illustration of the capabilities that militarised drones — the short name for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) — provide, even in a low- or medium-technology environment.

Drones have entered the public imagination and lexicon as military instruments. In 1999, India's military acquired its first drones from Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI). These were Searcher-1 and Searcher-2 drones, which flew reconnaissance missions over Pakistan, gathering military photographic intelligence

that proved invaluable in the Kargil War that year. When the US military entered Afghanistan in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist strikes, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) flew precision strikes on terrorist targets with Predator drones.

However, meteoric growth in the capabilities of drones soon transformed industries such as agriculture, construction, logistics, and health care. Soon drones became essential tools for data collection, monitoring, and automation in multiple applications. In line with these developments, private drone manufacturer DroneAcharya on Tuesday entered into a strategic partnership with Tata STRIVE for training drone pilots in India.

“This collaboration aims to provide specialised training in the rapidly growing drone industry, empowering candidates with the skills and knowledge they need to secure better livelihoods and chart a promising career path,” the two companies announced in a statement on Tuesday.

This growth is expected to continue, creating numerous jobs. However, access to training and education in drone technology often remains limited to the military or to those with financial means.

“This collaboration aims to address this disparity by providing training to underprivileged individuals, ensuring that they have a fair shot at joining the drone workforce,” said Prateek Srivastava,

who heads DroneAcharya.

DroneAcharya Aerial Innovations is India's first listed drone company and the highest-rated remote pilot training organisation (RPTO) in India. It has trainers and a comprehensive curriculum and a track record of producing drone professionals.

Tata STRIVE, a division of the Tata Community Initiatives Trust, promotes skill development and employability.

The key outcome of the DroneAcharya-Tata STRIVE partnership will be a training programme that includes drone pilot-training certified by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and job assistance.

“Candidates will receive hands-

on training in drone piloting, maintenance, data analysis, and regulatory compliance. Moreover, they will gain insights into the various applications of drones in industries like agriculture, surveying, disaster management, and more,” said Amit Takte, chief technology officer, DroneAcharya.

The first batch will consist of 20 persons. This will subsequently be scaled up, owing to a new mandate that enables individuals with any ID and address proof document issued by the Indian government to enrol for this course.

Candidates with drone-related skills can secure employment that increases their earning potential, while also contributing to the growth of the drone industry.