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Counter-Drone Strategy for Country's Airports Is Ready

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The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has finalized a strategy to neutralize drones near airports as the BCAS is mandated to ensure aviation security.

Key Highlights

- The proposed measure includes neutralizing drones through a “soft kill” approach which will include entrapping or jamming drones instead of destroying them.
- A “soft kill” approach instead of a hard kill approach has been suggested because destroying a drone with a payload of explosives or biochemical will result in an unintended attack.

NOTE: The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) was initially set up in January 1978 on the recommendation of the Pande Committee. The main responsibility of BCAS are to lay down standards and measures in respect of the security of civil flights at International and domestic airports in India.

Why the Need for a Strategy?

- Regular sighting of drones has made it a big threat for airport security as there are currently no counter-measures in place to shoot down a flying object.
- Operating a drone, an unmanned aircraft, is prohibited in areas near the airport. However, there is no guideline as to how to react when a drone is spotted in the vicinity of an airport.
- Other Measures
 - The Ministry of Civil Aviation had released draft rules for unmanned aircraft systems in 2017. The draft rules proposed to ban their operation within 5 km radius of an airport and 50 km from an international border. It also barred drones within 5 km radius of Vijay Chowk in New Delhi.
 - Ministry of Home Affairs may also prepare a separate plan to deal with drone attacks in sensitive zones such as Parliament.

NOTE: Drones, also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or remotely piloted aircraft system (RPAS), are used in several parts of the world in the armed forces. Apart from its use in the military, it is also used for civilian purposes such as monitoring crop production and infrastructure, natural calamities, surveys, commercial photography, aerial mapping, and package delivery.