

## NTPC allowed to use drones for research and inspection of Power Projects

By TIOL News Service:

**NEW DELHI, OCT 23, 2020:** MINISTRY of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted conditional exemption to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for the deployment of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) for carrying out research and inspection activities at Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Station, Madhya Pradesh, Gadawara Super Thermal Power Plant, Madhya Pradesh, and Sipat Super Thermal Power Project, Chhattisgarh using drones.

Shri Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation said, "NTPC will use the drones to carry out terrain mapping, stockpile volumetric analysis, aerial inspections and other applications at the three NTPC sites. This will provide NTPC excellent data with high accuracy at a fraction of the cost. This is in line with Government of India's attempts to promote use of industrial drones in infrastructure, mining, agriculture and disaster relief etc."

The conditional exemption is till 31st December 2020 or until the full operationalization of Digital Sky Platform, whichever is earlier. Conditions and limitations to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd to carry out research and inspection activities at National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Sites - Vindhyachal Super Thermal Power Station, Madhya Pradesh/Gadawara Super Thermal Power Station, Madhya Pradesh /Sipat Super Thermal Power Station, Chhattisgarh using Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems:

- This exemption to National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd from the relevant provisions of CAR Section 3, Series X, Part I, is subject to exemption from Rule 15A of the Aircraft Rules, 1937 by Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall obtain necessary clearances from (a) Local Administration (b) Ministry of Defence (c) Ministry of Home Affairs (d) Air Defence clearance from Indian Air Force and (e) Airport Authority of India (AAI) prior to operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS).
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall only operate the RPAS which has been voluntarily disclosed to Government of India and issued with a valid Drone Acknowledgement Number (DAN) (i.e. D1DXOOS1T and D1DXOOS24 for NETRA PRO of M/s IdeaForge Technology Pvt Ltd).
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall submit a comprehensive brief on the scope of operations and the copy of SOP to Flight Standards Directorate (FSD), DGCA. Operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) shall be carried out only after the vetting/ approval of SOP.
- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall take necessary permission regarding Aerial Photography, if applicable, from Directorate of Regulations & Information, DGCA.
- The photographs/video-graphs, if taken through RPAS shall be used by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd only. National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall be responsible for security of RPAS and data collected through RPAS.
- The operation of RPAS shall be restricted to day operations (from sunrise to Sunset), within Visual Line Of Sight (VLOS).
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall indemnify DGCA from any legal cases or any other issues arising due to these operations.
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall ensure that the RPAS is in working condition and shall be responsible for any eventualities due to malfunction or disorientation of equipment.
- In case of any injury to any person due to physical contact with the equipment, National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall be responsible for medico-legal issues.
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall have adequate level of insurance to cover any damage to third party resulting from accident or incident occurred during the operation of RPAS.
- The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall ensure that hazardous material or variable payload are not carried in or using the RPA under any circumstances
- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall ensure safety, security and privacy of public, property, operator etc. Further, in case of any eventuality, DGCA shall not be held responsible.

- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall not operate the RPAS in no-fly zones specified in Para 13.1 of the CAR Section 3, Series X, Part I without the approval of concerned Ministries/ authorities.
- RPAS shall not be operated in the vicinity of airport as per the provisions of the CAR. If operated near the airport, approval from Airports Authority of India (AAI) shall be taken in advance regarding time and area of operations of RPAS.
- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd shall ensure that only trained I experienced bonafide personnel operates the RPAS.
- This letter shall not override other restrictions I SOP on Remotely Piloted Aircraft System framed by other Government Agencies.
- In case of incident/accident during at any phase of the operations, reports to be submitted to Air Safety Directorate of DGCA.