# Meeting with Smit Shah

President, Drone Federation of India · Arranged by Dadi · Bring the A4 opportunity sheet

**GOAL**
Leave with 2 opportunities to investigate, 1 realistic paid pilot, and named people to meet next.

**OPENING**
"*I'm exploring opportunities in drones, possibly with access through Bird to aviation, training, hospitality and ground handling. That isn't confirmed yet. I'm open to distribution, integration, training and after-sales, or something bigger where there's a clear gap. I want to know where customers already spend, where existing companies struggle, and where someone like me could build a real business.*"

**FOLLOW-UP FOR ANY PROMISING ANSWER**
Who buys this? Who controls the budget? What do they pay for? How long does a sale take? Which company already does it well?

★ = must ask if time is short. Questions run in the order you'd ask them.

## 1 · THE BIG PICTURE

1 **You say the market went from ₹60 cr to ₹4,000 cr. How much of that can new entrants reach? Is it concentrated in a few manufacturers and defence orders, or are smaller service and distribution businesses also profitable?**
Which segment grows fastest: defence, agriculture, enterprise or delivery?

2 **Which use cases have moved beyond demos into repeat paid contracts? Who buys, what do they buy, and why do they renew?**

★3 **With my background and access, which three drone businesses would you start today, and which would you avoid? Why?**

4 **Where are good drone companies losing business because they lack customer access, implementation, training, software or local service? Which ones need a partner for that?**

## 2 · SPECIFIC AREAS (FOLLOW HIS LEAD)

5 **Training: is the bigger gap basic pilot certification, specialised operational training, or training tied to jobs and contracts? Partner with an existing school or start one?**
How many certified pilots does India need compared with how many exist? What does the CISF partnership need? Do employers come back to hire again?

6 **Distribution & after-sales: is there room for a strong independent distributor and service network, or do manufacturers prefer to sell direct? What would make it defensible?**
Which distribution rights, installed base and service capability would that require?

7 **Components: which parts or services are consistently hard to source with reliable quality and lead times? Where could distribution, local assembly, testing or repair become a real business?**
Which parts still can't be made in India (flight controllers, ESCs, motors, batteries)? Why do some companies "hate" DFI over this?

★8 **Delivery: what would have to be true for a viable Zipline-style network in India? First customer, first route, who pays, and which approval route exists today?**

Why have earlier pilots not become lasting businesses? Should we partner with an Indian operator first? Which rule changes (e.g. beyond-visual-line-of-sight flying) are coming in 12–24 months?

9 **Defence: without a defence engineering team, where is a credible entry point: training, maintenance, software integration, components, or partnering with a supplier?**

For an EagleEye-style situational-awareness concept, who would validate the requirement and sponsor a paid pilot? How do funded trials, procurement timelines and working capital work? Does the Dronathon lead to real orders?

## 3 · OUR FIT

10 **If Bird became a partner, what real advantage would its academy, aviation relationships, hotels or ground handling give us? Which opportunity still makes sense without Bird?**

★11 **Which models could realistically reach ₹1 cr/month in revenue for a new entrant? What customer count, contract size, capital and team would that need, and how much profit remains?**

Separate recurring revenue from one-off big orders, and company revenue from an agent's commission.

12 **(Hand him the A4 sheet.) Could you mark each drone lead: credible and worth meeting / needs verification / avoid for now? Which three should we follow up first?**

Tell him he can rerank them completely.

## 4 · CLOSE

★13 **In my position, what would you validate in the next 90 days before committing serious capital? What evidence would make you go ahead, and what would make you stop?**

★14 **Could you introduce me to three people: a potential paying customer, a manufacturer or operator that needs a commercial partner, and someone who knows the approval or procurement process?**