



Anti-Naxal ops: UAVs finally show results for CRPF

New Delhi: After almost two years of painstaking efforts, the CRPF has successfully used unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to pick up ground conversation and movement of Maoist cadres in terrains of Chhattisgarh.

A special squad of the anti-Naxal force recently undertook an operation in the jungles of Narayanpur district during which a UAV was not only able to pick up "real-time imagery" of movement of Naxal cadres but also relayed the conversation among them.

"The conversation picked up by the radars of the UAV was immediately routed to a squad of CoBRA commandos. The UAV experiment has finally worked with all the devices of the machine functioning optimally to give the forces an edge in anti-Naxal operations," a senior CRPF officer said.

The CRPF field commanders have also begun using the modern Android phones for co-ordinates of the difficult terrain and other Naxal hotbed locations in the state.

"The images gathered by the UAV are much better than what is available on Google map and Terra explorer. The Android phones are giving us good information about the inhabited areas," the officer said.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), along with other forces and technical experts drawn from the Army and the NSG, has been trying to deploy UAVs for operational planning since April 2010, when 75 CRPF men and a state police personnel were killed in a deadly Naxal ambush in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada area.

The force has also begun providing its strike units with Global Positioning System (GPS) locators which keep alive the line of communication when radio sets and mobile phones go dead deep inside the jungles.

A CRPF official, involved in anti-Maoist operations, said personnel of the force have also begun sending SMSes through the GPS devices to their control rooms and command headquarters which continuously keep a track of the patrol units.

The force has also successfully tested a mini-UAV 'Netra' in the jungles of Bijapur. It will be exclusively used for reconnaissance of Naxal hideouts.

'Netra' runs on a small payload of chargeable batteries and it was, according to sources, able to give exact grid co-ordinates and imagery of the areas to the CRPF and state government authorities.

They said the UAV will also help security forces like the CRPF, BSF and ITBP, along with state police units, to detect laying of mines and IEDs by the Maoists.

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