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Drones may be used in Maoist-hit Jangalmahal

The state police may soon deploy drones to maintain heightened vigil in Jangalmahal, the crucial decision depending upon the “experience” of the Kolkata Police which used unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to patrol the city skies during the recently concluded Durga Puja. “The purchase of UAVs will depend on the report of the Kolkata Police since they have started using it since Durga Puja,” Barun Mullick, special inspector-general, (modernisation), told Hindustan Times.

The UAVs, commonly known as drones, are aircraft without any human pilot on board. They are used for military and special operation purposes all over the world for round-the-clock vigil.

The need to purchase UAVs has been raised time and again by many senior officers working in the Maoist-hit Jangalmahal areas. In the recent past, during a meeting where officers from Jangalmahal were present, all of them supported the idea and it was decided that the final decision will be taken on the basis of the Kolkata Police’s report.

If early experience of the Kolkata Police is any indication, drones will soon man the skies of Jangalmahal. On Tuesday, Kolkata police commissioner Surojit Kar Purokayastha said the department has got satisfactory results from the UAV that was pressed into service from panchami (October 9).

“Henceforth, we will use it in all law-and-order situations across the city. We are satisfied with the UAV experience,” Purokayastha said.

In 2010, during the tenure of Bhupinder Singh as director-general of state police, a functional testing of UAV was carried out by the state police but it was found to be unsatisfactory.

“The resolution of the cameras was not so satisfactory. We tested it in Alipore area. The picture was not so clear and after watching it, the DG turned down the proposal. At that time, we had an urgent need to purchase UAVs. We asked the agency that came to sell it, to increase the resolution of the camera,” said an officer of the state intelligence branch (IB).

The IB officer said if UAVs are purchased, a separate system will be formed for the project so that after receiving photos from the drones, it can be directly sent to the state IB.

Since Jangalmahal is forested and it's difficult to man the terrain for security personnel, UAVs are a viable option to keep constant surveillance.

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