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Gujarat Police uses Netra UAV to keep watch over Rath Yatra

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Ahmedabad, 10 July 2013

Presented above is a picture of NETRA unmanned air vehicle flying in Ahmedabad sky during Rath Yatra today. These GPS-based automated UAVs fitted with infrared cameras gave the state police a bird’s eye view in terms of surveillance during Rath Yatra.

Under a pilot project to boost surveillance, Gujarat Police have purchased two unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that were used today for the first time in the Jagannath Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad.

Chief Minister Narendra Modi had appreciated the project when these UVAs, named “netras”, were displayed before him during the 1st May Gujarat Day function this year.

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The UAVs are indigenous (they have nothing to do with the US drones) and they have been purchased for Rs 55 lakh a piece from a start-up company run by ex-IITians called ideaForge Technology, in collaboration with the Union government-run Defence Research and Development Organisation. ideaForge is promoted by three former IIT students – Ankit Mehta, Rahul Singh and Ashish Bhat. They have aptly named their product NETRA.

NETRA flies over a desired area at 300 m above the ground.

Once it takes off, the battery-powered device flies on auto pilot, charting its flight path with the help of anti-collision sensors. The device, weighing two kgs, is capable of recording and sending continuous real time video of every movement on the ground within a 5-km radius. NETRA boasts a “zoom-in” facility, which will help identify human activity up to 500 m away and can fly up to 2.5 km distance from the take-off point.

The UAV has a speed of 30 kilometres per hour. The UAV can fly autonomously. In other words, it flies and returns on its own to the base after completing its task.

NETRA is fitted with day and night cameras. A ‘fail-safe’ system has been installed to ensure it returns even if communication breaks down or when battery power depletes.

Netra is a Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) UAV with Quadrotor (4 rotor) configuration. Other than the motors, there is no moving part, which makes it almost maintenance free. All the manoeuvres can be performed by independently by controlling the speeds of these rotors. The user does not have to care about the flight and navigation since all of this is done by a smart auto-pilot on-board.

Netra was first demonstrated in 2010. It is used by CRPF, but for the purpose of crowd management, it has been used for the first time in Ahmedabad today. Gujarat Police had set up a control room at Shahibag Circuit house to get live footage captured by NETRA.

With success in Rath Yatra these devices would be used for threat assessment, police deployment, traffic movement, VIP movement and important festivals and events in the state.

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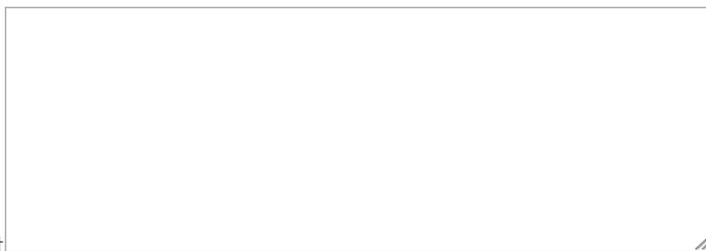
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