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RAF deploys UAV for surveillance at Sabarimala

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Rapid Action Force personnel on crowd control duty at Sannidhanam in Sabarimala.

The 105 Battalion of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) headquartered at Vellore on the outskirts of Coimbatore city has used unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) for crowd assessment and management at Sabarimala.

The RAF has successfully completed the bandobust at Sannidhanam, where lakhs of devotees thronged for the mandala pooja and makara vilakku mahotsavam.

NETRA

The unmanned aerial vehicle known as NETRA was designed by DRDO for surveillance and reconnaissance operations.

RAF 105 Battalion, entrusted with the assignment of securing Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala, inducted the UAV to monitor and regulate the huge crowd of pilgrims.

The UAV carried out surveillance in an area of 1.5 km at a height of 300 metres.

Its high resolution CCD camera facilitates surveillance of human activity up to 500 metres and was sending live video feed through a local wireless network to the laptops monitored by RAF at its control room in Sannidhanam

The RAF worked in tandem with the Kerala Police and Travancore Devaswom Board in crowd management.

Crowd control

RAF has been involved in crowd control and management at Sannidhanam for the 16th year now, R. Jayakumar, Commandant of the 105 Battalion of RAF told *The Hindu*.

Monitoring of the pilgrims right from Pamba, Neelimala, Appachimedu, Marakootam, Sarankuthi and Nadaipandal helped in assessing the inflow, managing the crowd using barricades and releasing them in batches. This helped in averting incidents of stampede.

The RAF men were also involved in rescuing ailing devotees requiring medical assistance. Roughly one company of RAF will be posted throughout the year at Sannidhanam on a rotation basis, Mr. Jayakumar added.

