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Battling insurgents and stone pelters, CRPF to begin using its 'third eye' in Kashmir operations

The Central Reserve Police Force is set to start using Netra drones during its counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir.



[Kamaljit Kaur Sandhu](#) | Edited by Dev Goswami
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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 The CRPF will begin using Netra drones during its operations in the Valley.
- 2 The drone will alert jawans to any suspicious movement around an operation zone.
- 3 The drones have seen success in anti-Naxal operations.

After a spate of encounters and incidents of mob violence against security forces in the Valley, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), has decided to use its 'third eye', the Netra unmanned aerial vehicle in anti-insurgency and road opening operations.

In the recent past, there have been attacks on multiple attacks on BSF and Army convoy in the state resulting in huge setback to the forces.

Just yesterday, the CRPF was involved in violent clashes with local civilians following an encounter in Budgam. Three civilians were killed in clashes while 43 CRPF jawans suffered injuries due to stone pelting.

Sources tell India Today that though the Netra drones are already deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, they are not as actively used as compared to operation zones afflicted with left wing extremism or the Naxal region.

The Netra drones have seen success in the Maoist hot bed, and the force however plans to use this as a force multiplier. Officially, the CRPF refused to accept or deny the report. Zulfikar Hassan, the Inspector General (Operations) of CRPF said "These are operational details, which we don't intend to share."

However, another senior officer in the force told India Today that using the Netra drones will help alert the force about any suspicious movements when it carries out road opening operations. The drone will also give help give jawans a heads up in case of a crowd build up in operational areas.

The force already has a few drones in the Valley, but up until now they were gathering dust. They have now been activated, and a top CRPF source tells India Today, "We plan to have one UAV in every battalion for added advantage."

DRAWBACKS

The Netra drones do have a few drawbacks. The UAV can be stay up in the air only for 30 minutes, which would not be long enough for encounters, which often last from several hours to a few days.

The force is also wondering how and if it will be able to use the drones in residential and closed environments in the Valley.

So far, the drone has proven to be successful only in open areas. "However, the use of Netra will give more confidence to our soldier and (ensure) better preparation," a source said.

OTHER UPGRADES PLANNED

The force has also been using vehicle-mounted cameras to record all moments of a live encounter. The CRPF studies visuals from these cameras after an encounter is over.

Now, sources tell us, the will be working on getting a live feed of visuals with upgraded technology. The force said this technology was previously a "work in progress."

CRPF IG, Operations Zulfikar Hassan, said, "The decision to mount cameras on all vehicles in operation has been taken to better our strategy and forces response in crowd control."

The force has also taken measures like body protectors, besides use of non-lethal weapons to counter stone pelting. The UAV will be the latest force multiplier for the force in the trouble-torn state.

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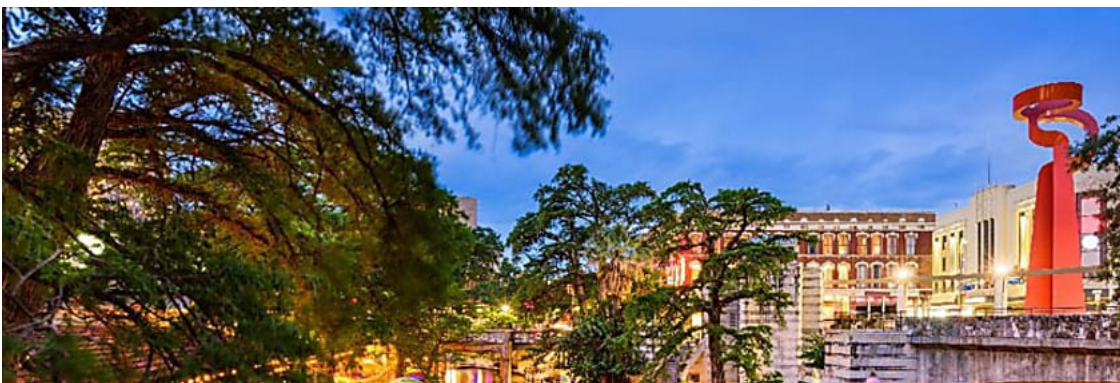
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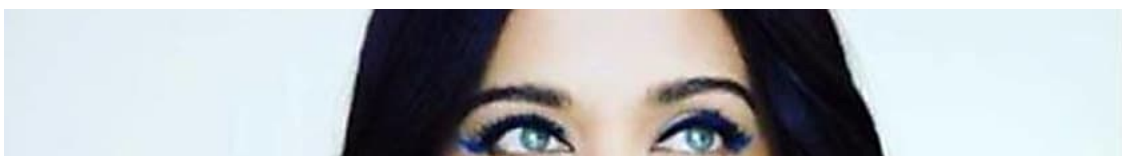
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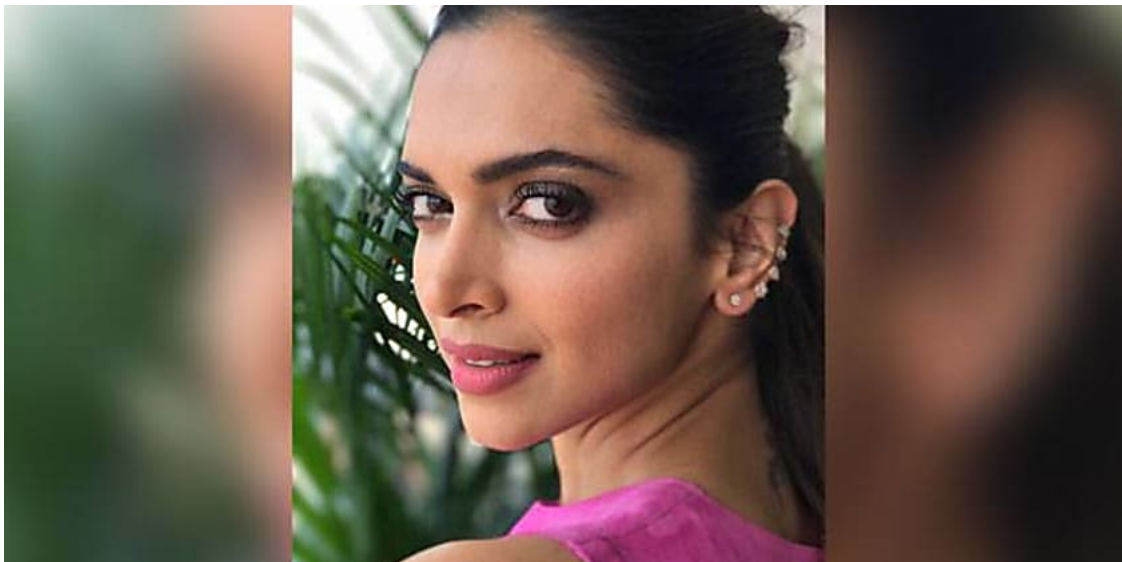




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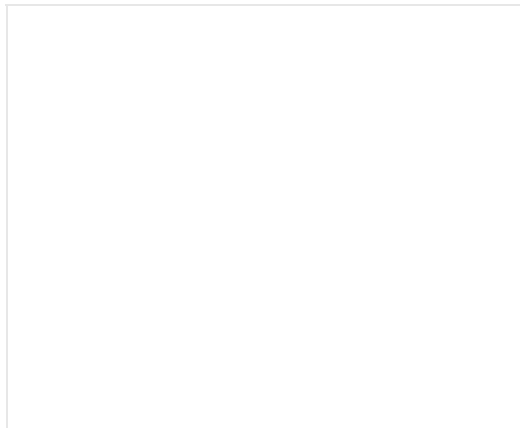
   

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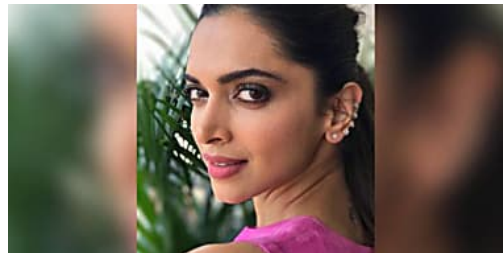
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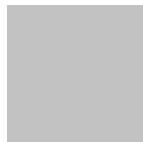
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