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India Gears Up for Large Scale Procurement of UAV Systems



Tactical UAV System (Picture: Thales Group)

The Indian Government has earmarked substantial amounts of money for the procurement of UAV systems it was reported in The Times of India last week.

This is just part of the massive overall increase of spending on internal security projects in India, reflecting the multiple security problems facing the world's biggest democracy. This year alone India has increased its security spending by 25%.

In this latest procurement announcement, UAV's have been identified as a vital technology in securing the thousands of miles of land and coastal borders.

The announcement outlined how they will also be used in combating internal and external threats including Islamic Fundamentalist terrorists, originating in Pakistan or elsewhere and home grown security threats such the Naxal Maoist groups.

The little known internal war against Naxal terrorists has intensified in recent times; costing India the lives of more than 2600 civilians, security forces and military personnel in the last 3 years alone.

In the worst-affected states of Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa, with their hilly terrain and dense jungle, UAV capability is seen as a vital tool in combating the terrorist threat.

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The Skylark-II (pictured) from Elbit Systems

The Times of India.

UAVs, with in-built camera and a well-equipped data and video link, will gather and record information which will be shared among security forces engaged in anti-Naxal operations. The UAVs also provide flexible surveillance and reconnaissance capability with external payload, including weapons capability. "Since Maoists keep changing their movements, deployment of UAVs will certainly be an advantage for security forces," an official told

It was also reported that the Army wants to introduce a "large number" of man-portable "mini" and "micro" UAVs for short-range surveillance and NBC (nuclear, biological, chemical) detection. Special Forces battalions will also get these "stealthy" drones for covert missions beyond enemy lines and counter-terrorism operations.

UAV systems are just one of the many technologies that the Indian government are planning to procure in their drive to meet the multiple security challenges they face in the coming years.

GSI 2010 will provide the platform for the Homeland Security industry to showcase their products and services to assist the Indian Security Forces in their search for UAVs and fulfil their requirements.

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