

Drones to be used for aerial surveillance in Wayanad forest divisions

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Wayanad District Collector Renu Raj operating drones at civil station. Photo : Special arrangement

Topic | Wayanad

Kalpetta: Aerial surveillance using drones would be introduced in three forest divisions of Wayanad. The District administration handed over two drones to the forest officials as part of Wayanad Initiative for Future Impact (WIFI) programme here on Tuesday . The initiative aims at improving the technical advancement of various sectors in the district.

Dearth of technologically driven surveillance systems for the forest department in the state had come to the fore after three persons died in

elephant attack in Wayanad early this year.

When the 'problem elephant' Belur Makhna unleashed terror in the villages of Malanathavadi in February this year killing Ajeesh, a driver at the portico of a house, the tracking system used by the forest department personnel came in for lot of criticism.

The forest department came to know about the migration of another problem elephant Thanneer Komban from Karnataka to the human habitats of Mananthavadi town in Wayanad only after many hours.

South Wayanad DFO Ajith K Raman said that the drones could be used for all three forest divisions of Wayanad at times of crisis. "We would have been able to deal with many serial elephant attacks in the past more effectively if we had drones. Tracking animals in the wild with expert personnel is risky. With drones in the air, the movement of such animals could be tracked more effectively," said Ajith K Raman.

District Collector Dr Renu Raj inaugurated the drones operating them on the Civil Station premises on Tuesday. The two drones, priced at Rs 3,28,030 in total, were sourced by the Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) fund of Manappuram Financiers.