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Anti-Drug Working Group BRICS

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Why in News

Recently, the 4th Session of the **BRICS Anti-Drug Working Group** was held through a video conference.

The session was **chaired by Russia** this year.

Key Points

- **Issues Raised by India:** India raised the misuse of **darknet** and modern technology used for **drug trafficking by the international criminals** in the meeting.
 - It also called for nodal points to enable **real-time information sharing** among BRICS nations.
- **Trends of Drug Trafficking:** The BRICS grouping discussed **international and regional trends of illegal trafficking** in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances among others.
 - It also discussed **steps to curb** increased instances of drug trafficking through the maritime route.
- **A Global Menace:**
 - According to the **report** released in May 2020 by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Report (UNODC)**, **Covid-19** induced **lockdowns** and movement restrictions may lead to an initial statistical reduction in drug seizures, but is **unlikely to have any effect on illicit drug supply**.

- **India and Illicit Drug Trade:**

- **Major Hub of Illicit Drug Trade:** According to **UNODC**, India is one of the major hubs of illicit drug trade ranging from age-old **cannabis** to newer prescription drugs like tramadol, and designer drugs like methamphetamine.
- **Drug Trafficking Routes:** India is in the **middle of two major illicit opium production** regions in the world, the **Golden Crescent (Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan)** in the west and the **Golden Triangle (South-East Asia)** in the east.

- **Anti-Drug Action Plan:**

India has also launched the **Anti-Drug Action Plan for 2020-21** which includes:

- De-addiction Facilities,
- Drop-in-Centres for Addicts,
- Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCAs),
- Drug-Free India Campaign.

- **Darknet:**

- It refers to the **hidden internet platform** used for **narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities** by using the secret alleys of the **onion router** (ToR- a free and open-source software for enabling anonymous communication) to stay away from the surveillance of law enforcement agencies.

It is **tough to crack** because of its end-to-end encryption.

- The **dark net is part of the deep web**, which encompasses all unindexed sites that don't pop up when an Internet search is done.
- However, **not all activities associated with the deep web are nefarious like darknet**. In most cases, these pages are not searchable because they are **password-protected** and require authorization in order to access them.

Personal email, online banking, and other similar sites are included under the umbrella of the deep web.

- The internet we see today is the only tip of the iceberg, the majority is deep web only.

BRICS

- BRICS is an **acronym** for the grouping of the world's leading emerging economies, namely **Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa**.

- In 2001, the British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term **BRIC** to describe the four emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China.
- The grouping was formalised during the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers in 2006.
- **South Africa** was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.

- The **chairmanship** of the forum is **rotated annually** among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the **New Development Bank (NDB)**. They also signed the **BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement**.

Golden Triangle

- It represents the region coinciding with the rural mountains of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.
- It is Southeast Asia's main opium-producing region and one of the oldest narcotics supply routes to Europe and North America.

Golden Crescent

- This region of South Asia is a principal global site for opium production and distribution.
- It comprises Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.

Source: PIB