



BIMSTEC Conference on 'Combating Drug Trafficking'

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Why in News

Recently, **India hosted** the first-ever **BIMSTEC** Conference on Combating Drug Trafficking in New Delhi. It was organised by the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**, India's federal agency for drug law enforcement.

BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) is an international organisation comprising 7 countries — India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand - that fall in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal.

Key Points

- **Drug trafficking** is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.
- The **UN's World Drug Report** points out that **over 5% of the global population between 15-64 years of age is addicted** to narcotics and use of illicit drugs.
- The BIMSTEC conference sought to provide an **opportunity to all the member nations to deliberate on the increased threats posed by drug trafficking** and the **collective steps** that were required to negate such threats.

BIMSTEC and Drug-Trafficking

- Regional maritime connectivity and trade through the Bay of Bengal are imperative for the shared prosperity and economic growth of the entire BIMSTEC region. However, one of the most prominent of security challenges for the region is drug trafficking through sea.
- It is thus very important for all countries to engage with each other to exchange ideas, policies and best practices in order to combat this menace.
- In general, Asian countries are increasingly being affected by **drug trafficking**. BIMSTEC, being the key link between South Asian and South East Asian nations, is one of the most effective platforms to tackle this global threat.

India and Drug-Trafficking

- India is a transit point for opiates produced illegally.
India is in the middle of two major illicit opium production regions in the world:
 - The **Golden Crescent (Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan)** in the West.
 - The **Golden Triangle (South-East Asia)** in the East.
- **Manipur and Mizoram** having borders with Myanmar and other coastal States are sensitive and may become a gateway for illicit drugs entering India.
- To protect itself from the menace of drug trafficking, India has adopted a **Zero Tolerance Policy** towards all kinds of narcotics and psychotropic substances to realise its vision of a **Drug-free India**.
India has also started an **e-portal for digitalisation of drug data** to assist various drug enforcement agencies.

Source:PIB