



Fighting Drug Menace

Why in News

India has signed **26 bilateral pacts, 15 memoranda of understanding and two agreements on security cooperation** with different countries **for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic, drugs and psychotropic substances**, besides chemical precursors.

Key Points

▪ Drug Menace In India:

- The menace of drug addiction has **spread fast among the youth of India.**
 - India is sandwiched between **two largest Opium producing regions of the world** that is [the Golden triangle on one side and the Golden crescent on other.](#)
 - The **golden triangle** area comprises **Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos.**
 - The **golden crescent** area includes **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.**
- According to the [World Drug Report 2021](#), **prescription drugs and their ingredients or 'precursors'** are being increasingly **diverted for recreational use in India--the largest manufacturer of generic drugs** in the world.
 - India is also **linked to shipment of drugs sold** on the 19 major [darknet](#) markets analysed over 2011-2020.
- As per the report Magnitude of Substance Use in India released by [All India Institute Of Medical Science \(AIIMS\)](#) in 2019:
 - **Around 5 crore Indians** reported to have used cannabis and opioids at the time of the survey (conducted in the year 2018).
 - It has been estimated that there are **about 8.5 lakh people who inject drugs.**
 - Of the total cases estimated by the report, more than half of them are contributed by states like **Punjab, Assam, Delhi, Haryana, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Uttar Pradesh.**
 - About 60 lakh people are estimated to need help for their opioid use problems.

▪ Various Steps taken:

- **Coordination with Various International Organisations:**
 - The [Narcotics Control Bureau \(NCB\)](#) coordinated with various **international organisations** for sharing information and intelligence to combat transnational drug trafficking.
 - They included the [SAARC](#), [BRICS](#), Colombo Plan, [ASEAN](#), [BIMSTEC](#), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and the International Narcotics Control Board.
- **Coordination among Various Central and State Agencies:**
 - For this, the [Narco Coordination Centre \(NCORD\)](#) **mechanism** was set up by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in 2016 for effective drug law enforcement.

- This NCORD system was restructured into a **four-tier scheme up to district level** in July 2019, for better coordination.
- A **Joint Coordination Committee with the NCB Director General** as its chairman was set up in July 2019, to monitor the investigation into cases involving large seizures.
- **SIMS (Seizure Information Management System) Portal:**
 - For **digitisation of pan-India drug seizure data**, the MHA launched an **e-portal called 'SIMS'** in 2019 for all the drug law enforcement agencies under the mandate of **Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS)**.
- **National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse:**
 - It was constituted to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs; rehabilitating addicts, and educating the public against drug abuse, etc.
- **National Drug Abuse Survey:**
 - The government is also conducting the Survey to measure trends of drug abuse in India through the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of AIIMS.
- **Project Sunrise:**
 - It was **launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016**, to tackle the **rising HIV prevalence** in north-eastern states in India, especially among people injecting drugs.
- [The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. \(NDPS\) 1985:](#)
 - It prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.
 - The NDPS Act has since been amended thrice - in 1988, 2001 and 2014.
 - The Act extends to the whole of India and it applies also to all Indian citizens outside India and to all persons on ships and aircraft registered in India.
- ['Nasha Mukh Bharat', or Drug-Free India Campaign:](#)
 - It focuses on community outreach programs.
- **International Treaties and Conventions to Combat Drug Menace:**
 - **India is signatory** of the following International treaties and conventions to combat the menace of Drug Abuse:
 - [United Nations \(UN\) Convention on Narcotic Drugs \(1961\)](#)
 - UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971).
 - [UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(1988\)](#)
 - UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) 2000

Way Forward

- While steps must be taken to **stop supply by tamping down on cross-border trafficking, imposing harsher penalties under the NDPS Act**, or improving drug enforcement, India must also **address the problem on the demand side**.
- Addiction should not be seen as a character flaw, but as an ailment that any other person could be struggling with. Therefore, the **stigma associated with drug taking needs to be reduced**. Society needs to understand that drug-addicts are victims and not criminals.
- Certain crop drugs which have more than **50% alcohol and opioids need to be contained**. **Strict action is required from police officers** and the excise and narcotics department to curb the problem of drug menace in the country.
- **Education curriculum** should include chapters on drug addiction, its impact and also on de-

addiction. Proper Counselling is another alternative.

Source: TH

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