

## Drug trafficking in India

### Why in news?

*The narcotics trade is not only a social problem that harms youth and families but a national security problem as the money it generates is diverted for disruptive activities.*

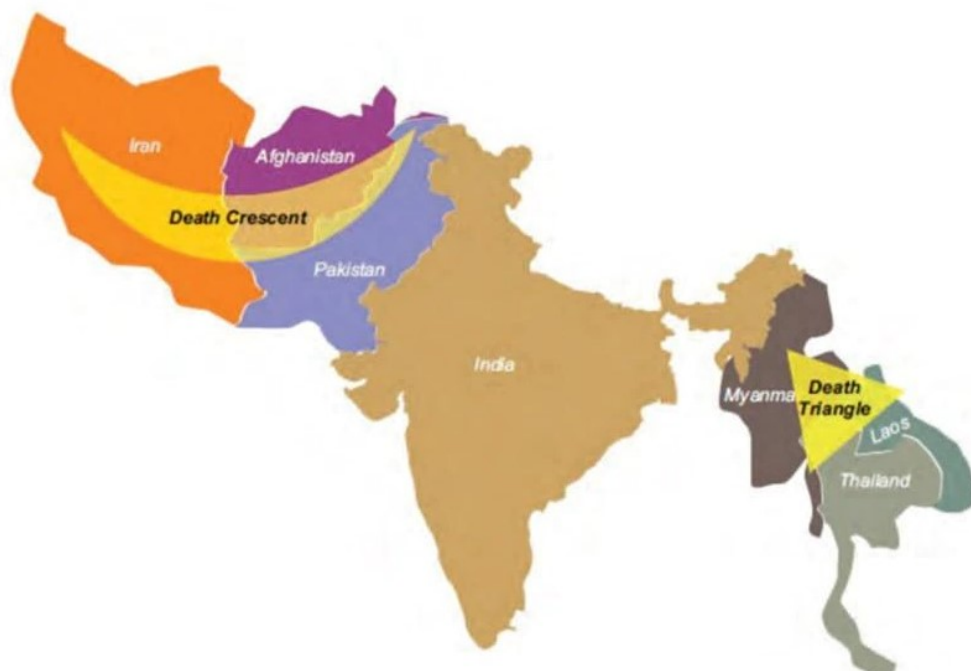
### What are Narcotic drugs?

- Narcotic drugs refer to any substance that binds with opioid receptors in the central nervous system.
- They are used to treat moderate to severe pain and are capable of producing sleep.
- **Opioid** is an umbrella term which refers to all natural, semisynthetic and synthetic chemicals.
- For example: Heroin, morphine, oxycodone, and codeine.
- **Opiates** are a type of opioid that derives naturally from the opium, or poppy plant.
- **Opium** is derived from the opium poppy plant which hold a milky substance called latex.
- The latex that contains a number of chemicals, including morphine and codeine is extracted and dried to create opium.
- The terms opiate, opioid, and narcotics are used interchangeably.

### What is the problem with India?

- **Neighbourhood** - India is sandwiched between the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle.

*The Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle are names given to Asia's two principal areas of illicit opium production. The Golden Crescent comprises Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan and the Golden Triangle represents the regions of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand*



How India is caught between the “Death Crescent” and the “Death Triangle”;  
(Source: NCB, India)

- **Long Coastline** - Since India have a coastline of around 7500km, it aids in safe trade and transfer of drugs.
- **Porous borders** - It provides a safe space for illegal drug trade.
- **Cocaine users** - India has become a hot destination for cocaine, the supply of which is controlled by South American drug cartels.

### What are the threats to India?

- **Social Problem** - It harms youth and families and reduces the social capital of India.
- **Link** - The nexus between drug traffickers, organised criminal networks and terrorists causes instability in the country.
- The money generated through this drug trade are used to fund various insurgent and terrorist movements.
- **Use of technology** - Due to its anonymity and low risks, dark nets are widely used for illicit drug trafficking.

### What are the steps taken by India?

- **Conventions** - India is a signatory to all 3 UN drug control conventions, namely,
  1. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs 1961 (amended by the 1972 Protocol)
  2. The Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971
  3. The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988
- **Legislations** - The legislative policy on narcotic drugs are as follows:
  1. Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940
  2. The Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act)

3. The Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988
4. NDPS (Regulation of Controlled Substances) Order, 1993

- **Institutions** - Agencies responsible for various functions are as follows:
  - The *Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance* has the nodal co-ordination role under NDPS Act, 1985 and Illicit traffic Act, 1988.
  - The *Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment* is the nodal agency responsible for implementing the drug demand reduction programme in the country.
  - *Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)* under the Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal agency dealing with drug trafficking in India.

### What can be done to prevent drug trafficking?

- **Twin goals** - Adopt a comprehensive approach to reduce both the supply as well as demand for narcotics and drugs.
- **Coordination** - There are various agencies in India to look after drug trafficking. Coordinating all these agencies is crucial in eliminating drug trafficking.
- **Intelligence** - There is an urgent need to develop a system for sharing of information by state police forces and the central agencies
- It would help the enforcement agencies connect the distributors to source of supply.
- **Implementation** - Effective implementation of the existing laws plays a very important role.
- **Regulation** - curtailing the easy flow of money through regulating the crypto markets, darknet.
- **Surveillance** - Upgrading the maritime surveillance

### Quick facts

#### Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

- NCB was constituted in 1986.
- It is the Central Authority for the purpose of exercising the powers and functions for the following
  - Co-ordination of actions by various offices, State Governments and other authorities under
    - The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) 1985,
    - Customs Act,
    - Drugs and Cosmetics Act,
    - Any other law for the time being in force in connection with the enforcement provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985.
- Coordination of actions taken by the other concerned Ministries, Departments and Organizations in respect of matters relating to drug abuse.
- Assistance to concerned authorities in foreign countries and concerned international organizations to facilitate coordination suppression of illicit traffic in these drugs and substances.

#### Opium Cultivation in India

- The opium poppy (*Papaver Somniferum* L.) is an annual medicinal herb.
- It contains many alkaloids that are frequently used as an analgesic, anti-tussive and anti-spasmodic in modern medicine.
- Besides, it is also grown as a source of edible seed and seed oil.
- India is the only country authorised by the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) to produce gum opium.
- **Licit cultivation** of opium is carried out in the Indian states of
  1. Madhya Pradesh
  2. Rajasthan
  3. Uttar Pradesh

## References

1. [The Indian Express | Terrorist-Drug Trade Nexus](#)
2. [UNODC | India Profile](#)
3. [NCB | About NCB](#)

