

## Issue of Narcotics in India

### Why in news?

*Around 800 sleuths of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) interdicted thousands of kilograms of drugs smuggled into India, under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.*

### What does the World Drug Report 2022 say?

- The UN's World Drug Report 2022 (WDR) stated that in 2020, one in every 18 people had used a drug in the past 12 months.
- The report also revealed that cocaine manufacturing reached a record high in 2020, so did its trafficking.

### How much narcotics were seized?

- Apart from seizures in the border, the DRI had seized narcotics and psychotropic substances inside the country as well.
- Per latest data published by National Crime Records Bureau, 1,052 kg of heroin was seized in 2021, a staggering increase from 343 kg and 137 kg in 2020 and 2019 respectively.
- The bulk of the seizure was from Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Drugs such as Acetic Anhydride, ATS, cocaine, CBCS, ephedrine, ganja, hashish, LSD, MDMA, mephedrone were also seized.

*Abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs costs the nation \$740 billion annually in crime, lost work productivity and health. Out of this, \$11 billion goes in healthcare and \$192 billion gets drained due to the illicit use of drugs.*

### What are the issues with India's borders?

- India's 15,106.7 km land border and 7516.6 km coastline makes it vulnerable to narcotics smuggling.
- The North-East States that share borders with Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, China, and Bhutan are the hot-spots for drug smuggling.
- The location of India with the 'golden crescent' on one side and the 'golden triangle' on the other makes it all the more vulnerable to drug smuggling.

*The Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle are the names given to Asia's two principal areas of illicit opium production.*

*The Golden Crescent comprises Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.*

*The Golden Triangle represents the region coinciding with the rural mountains of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand.*

- **Other challenges** - Apart from the challenge of “porous” borders, the other challenges are
  - insufficient enforcement apparatus, and
  - a perceived lack of coordination among different agencies.
- But, a Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) has been in operation since 2016 to have effective coordination among various Ministries, Departments, Central and States law enforcement agencies.
- Apart from the role of enforcement agencies, it is necessary to tackle the menace of narcotics on the social and societal front.

### **What is needed?**

- **Countering internal demand** - Given the addictive nature, youth are particularly susceptible to fall prey to drugs and concerted effort is needed tackle the issue not only at the borders but also internally.
- To counter this internal demand, a campaign that leverages behavioural economics to nudge and inform people of the menace of drugs should be initiated in the form of a Jan Andolan.
- **Addiction centres** - drug and alcohol addiction centres should be supported and non-stigmatised, leveraging the support of CSR initiatives of corporates.
- **Coordination** - There should be greater coordination between Customs and other enforcement agencies to break the backbone of drug syndicates.
- **Involving RWAs** - Even Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) of housing societies should be mandated to incorporate suitable bye-laws in society rules to inform residents of the criminality of drugs.
- **Capacity enhancement** - A need for capacity enhancement in the border areas is imperative for effectively balancing the role of Customs in intercepting narcotics and facilitating genuine trade.
- Dedicated further capacity building of canine squads in Customs along with leveraging technology to improve detection can be considered.
- In the fight against illegal drugs, it may be time to instill a strong sense of fear, in both the smugglers/peddlers and the users of drugs!

### **Reference**

1. [Deccan Herald | Seizure of high-value drugs rises manifold in FY22: DRI report](#)
2. [The Hindu Business Line | Combating the menace of narcotics consumption](#)