

Drug Control in India: Vision Document 2026-2029 and NCB Annual Report 2025 Explained

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Drug Control in India Latest News

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the 10th Apex-Level Meeting of the **Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD)** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- At the meeting, organised by the **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)**, he released two key documents: the **Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029)** and the **NCB Annual Report 2025**.
- Together, they set out a time-bound national strategy and map the changing nature of the drug threat facing India.

The Vision Document on Drug Control (2026-2029)

- This document is a strategic roadmap targeting demand and supply reduction, as well as rehabilitation.
- The roadmap rests on a simple three-part foundation — **“detect, disrupt and destroy.”**

Core Shift: Dismantling Entire Networks

- The core shift in approach is from chasing individual carriers to dismantling entire networks.
- Enforcement will now target suppliers, financiers, handlers, facilitators and the organised syndicates behind them.
- A mission-mode campaign aims to identify and dismantle **100 major interstate** and **transnational drug cartels** through intelligence-led investigations and coordinated operations.

Whole-of-Government Approach

- The strategy is built around a whole-of-government model.
- More than 40 Ministries, central agencies, State governments, district administrations, educational institutions, civil society bodies and ordinary citizens are to work under a single national framework.

Key Specific Commitments

- **Legal reform:** The Department of Revenue will amend the NDPS Act and Rules to close loopholes and address regulatory gaps. States have been asked to send suggestions. The amendment also promises a more reformatory approach towards drug users and addicts.
- **Speedy justice:** The MHA is working to set up exclusive NDPS courts for fast convictions in major cases.
- **Following the money:** Financial investigation will be mandatory in major drug cases. There will be greater use of the **PITNDPS Act** (Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988) to attach illicit assets and strike at the financial base of trafficking networks.
- **Global reach:** States have been urged to pursue traffickers hiding abroad through Red Corner Notices with CBI's help.
- **Technology:** The plan calls for advanced surveillance, anti-drone systems, AI-enabled profiling and container scanning across land, sea and air routes.
- **Synthetic drugs:** Special focus on **methamphetamine, mephedrone** and emerging synthetic drugs, with tighter precursor controls. Chemical and pharmaceutical industries are to adopt voluntary compliance and flag suspicious transactions.

NCB Annual Report 2025: The Scale of the Threat

- NCB Annual Report 2025 was released during the 10th Apex-Level Meeting of the Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in New Delhi.
- The report records an **all-time high** of over 1.48 lakh cases and seizures of more than **1,200 tonnes** of narcotics and psychotropic substances.
- The seizures range from **plant-based drugs to synthetic substances**, diverted pharmaceuticals and precursor chemicals — a sign of how complex the threat has become.

A Shifting Global Supply: Myanmar Overtakes Afghanistan

- The single biggest change is in where India's opium now comes from. Myanmar has overtaken Afghanistan as the leading source of illicit opium.

- The reason is twofold: the **Taliban's 2022 ban** cut Afghan poppy cultivation sharply, while Myanmar's cultivation expanded amid conflict and economic collapse.
- Its Golden Triangle region — largely controlled by ethnic armed groups in Shan State — has become a poly-drug hub, producing both opiates and methamphetamine (Yaba tablets).

The Eastern Front: The Manipur and Mizoram Corridors

- The northeastern States of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland face the sharpest exposure.
- The Free Movement Regime (FMR) and porous, unfenced stretches along the India-Myanmar border have turned these States from peripheral transit zones into active staging grounds for distribution into the Indian heartland.
- Two corridors are highlighted:
 - **Manipur corridor** — through which National Highway 102 passes — is the most direct entry point and the primary land route for both heroin and methamphetamine tablets.
 - **Champhai corridor** in Mizoram, near Myanmar's Chin State, routes drugs towards Silchar (Assam's Barak Valley) via Aizawl.
- Crucially, the report links this trade not just to addiction but to arms smuggling and the financing of insurgent and terror groups — making it a direct internal security concern.

The Western Front: Drones over Punjab

- On India's western border, the Afghan pipeline has not disappeared despite the Taliban crackdown reducing production by 93% from its peak — an estimated 13,200 tonnes of pre-ban stockpiles continue to feed trafficking routes.
- The most striking trend here is drone-based smuggling from across the Pakistan border, which has risen five-fold in five years and hits Punjab hardest.
- The growth in drone incidents shows the rising operational maturity of these networks:
 - 3 (2021) → 35 (2022) → 28 (2023) → 178 (2024) → 305 (2025) — roughly a 100-fold rise in five years.
- Beyond drones, the South Asian arm of the Afghan trade also enters through the land frontier in Punjab and Rajasthan and via the **maritime route along the Gujarat and Maharashtra coasts**, using fishing vessels and small craft that slip below standard surveillance.

Digital Trafficking: Telegram and Encrypted Apps

- The report flags encrypted messaging apps — Telegram, WhatsApp and Signal — as major trafficking channels, with Telegram emerging as a key platform for **drug advertising**.
- Why this is harder to police than the darknet: these apps need no special access and work on any smartphone, lowering the entry barrier.
- Enforcement is difficult because of jurisdictional hurdles in getting platforms to cooperate, auto-deletion of messages, use of multiple accounts and layered communication, and cryptocurrency payments that protect anonymity.

Emerging Threats to Watch

- The report singles out two threats needing urgent attention:
 - **Nitazenes** — a class of synthetic opioids said to be up to 500 times more potent than heroin.
 - The deepening link between drug trafficking and organised violence across transit economies.
- India is also exposed to a wider global shift marked by ultra-potent synthetic opioids and record cocaine output.

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