



Concerns Regarding Opium Stockpiles in Afghanistan

For Prelims: [UNSC](#) report, [Poppy ban](#), [Narcotics trafficking](#), ISI, [Drug money](#), [Methamphetamine production](#), [Indian security agencies](#), [National Investigation Agency](#), PIB, UPSC CSE, PYQ.

For Mains: UNSC report, [Afghanistan opium stockpiles](#), [Taliban poppy ban](#), [Implication for India](#)

[Source: HT](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the latest report by the [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#) highlights significant concerns regarding **Afghanistan's extensive opium stockpiles** despite the Taliban's ban on poppy cultivation.

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- Despite the **Taliban's April 2022 ban on poppy** cultivation, Afghanistan retains substantial stockpiles of opium.
 - The report suggests it could **take several years to assess the full impact** of the ban due to these stockpiles.
- The trade-in narcotics remains significant, with **no noticeable reduction in drug exports** based on seizure data.
 - Senior Taliban figures and well-connected traders, including the Haqqani Network, continue to profit from drug trafficking.
 - **Key Taliban figures control** various narcotics trafficking routes.
- **Methamphetamine production** has surged, with significant quantities of fentanyl also being recorded.
 - Major hubs for methamphetamine production include Farah, Herat, and Nimroz, with active labs in Bahramcha, Dishu district, and Helmand province.

What are the Implications of Opium Stock Piles and Drug Trafficking?

- **Trafficking Networks:** A majority of drugs trafficked to India **originate from Afghanistan**, with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency controlling these networks.
- **Terrorism Funding:** Drug money is increasingly being used to fund **anti-India terror groups** such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).
 - Narcotics procured from Afghanistan are labelled in clandestine laboratories in Balochistan and then smuggled into India.
- **Significant Seizures:** Indian security agencies have uncovered direct links between Kandahar-based cartels and drug smuggling networks.
 - Notable seizures include the [National Investigation Agency \(NIA\)](#) intercepting 3,000 kg of heroin at [Mundra port](#) in September 2021.
- **Government Response:** **The** Union Home Minister has urged security agencies to adopt a ruthless approach towards smuggling networks.

- The central government is **working on installing container scanners** at all ports and land border crossings to curb drug trafficking.

Initiatives to Tackle Drug Abuse

- **Global Initiatives:**
 - **Single [Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961](#)**
 - **The [Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971](#)**
 - **The UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in [Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988](#).**
 - **India is a signatory to all three and has enacted the [Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances \(NDPS\) Act, 1985](#)**
 - Every year, the UN publishes a **[World Drug Report, the Global Drug Policy Index](#)**.
 - **[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)**: It was established in 1997 and was named the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2002.
 - It acts as the **Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention** by combining the **United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP)** and the Crime Prevention and **Criminal Justice Division of the United Nations Office in Vienna**.
- **Indian Initiatives:**
 - **[Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan/Drugs-Free India Campaign](#)**
 - **[National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction](#)**
 - **[Narco-Coordination Centre](#)**
 - **[National Fund to Control Drug Abuse](#)**

Famous Hotspot of Illicit Drugs

- The **[Golden Triangle](#)** refers to a region in **Southeast Asia known for the production of illicit drugs**, particularly Opium. It's an area where the borders of three countries meet: Myanmar (formerly Burma), Laos, and Thailand.
- **[Golden Crescent](#)** or "Death Crescent" region **includes Afghanistan and Iran** – making it a natural transit point for drugs **being smuggled out of Pakistan**.

Opium Regulation and Uses

- Narcotics Commissioner under the **Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act 1985 and Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Rules, 1985** performs all functions relating to superintendence of the **cultivation of the opium poppy and production of opium**.
- The opium poppy can be **cultivated only in such tracts as are notified by the Government**.
 - At present these tracts are **confined to three States, viz. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - Mandsaur district of Madhya Pradesh and Chittorgarh and Jhalawar Districts of Rajasthan **constitute about 80% of the total area cultivated**.
- **Uses of Opium:**
 - Opium is unique in its **therapeutic value and is indispensable in the medical world**.
 - It also finds use in **Homeopathy and Ayurveda or Unani systems** of indigenous medicines.
 - Opium which is used as an **analgesic, Anti-Tussive, Anti spasmodic** and as a source of edible seed oil, acts as a medicinal herb.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the implications of Afghanistan's opium trade on India's security and socio-economic stability. Highlight the measures that India can take to mitigate these challenges.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) has a 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air'.
2. The UNCAC is the ever-first legally binding global anti-corruption instrument.
3. A highlight of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the inclusion of a specific chapter aimed at returning assets to their rightful owners from whom they had been taken illicitly.
4. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated by its member States to assist in the implementation of both UNCAC and UNTOC.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q. In one of the districts of a frontier state, the narcotics menace has been rampant. This has resulted in money laundering, mushrooming of poppy farming, arms smuggling and near stalling of education. The system is on the verge of collapse. The situation has been further worsened by unconfirmed reports that local politicians as well as senior police officers are providing surreptitious patronage to the drug mafia. At that point of time a woman police officer, known for her skills in handling such situations is appointed as Superintendent of Police to bring the situation to normalcy.

Q. If you are the same police officer, identify the various dimensions of the crisis. Based on your understanding, suggest measures to deal with the crisis. **(2019)**