

# Russia to tighten security at border

Fred Weir  
Moscow, November 30

44/112  
PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin has said Russia must beef up security on its 60,000-km frontier to combat smugglers, narcotics traffickers and terrorists.

"No one wants to build a new Iron Curtain, but the term means for defending our interests and our external borders must be guaranteed," Mr Putin said in televised comments last night.

He said Russia's border guard service would be revamped over the next five years, in line with a

general and a sweeping military reform the Kremlin has ordered.

A major task is to demarcate Russia's borders, which have been wide open with several post-Soviet neighbours since the collapse of

## Drug-trafficking

the USSR almost a decade ago, he said. Smuggling of people and goods through Russia's largely unguarded frontiers is an epidemic problem:

But the greatest concern is a wave of heroin pouring into Russia

from ex-Soviet Central Asian states that border on Afghanistan.

The Kremlin's Security Council said this week that four million of Russia's 145-million people are now considered to be drug users, and over half of them are heroin addicts.

The rate of drug-related crimes in Russia has climbed 14-fold over the past decade.

"We consider the problem of the spread and use of drugs to now be in the category of a direct threat to the security of Russia," state TV quoted Security Council head Sergei Ivanov as saying.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

## Indo-U.S. pact on narcotics control

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 27.** India and the United States today signed an agreement to expand cooperation in narcotics control and drug enforcement efforts in India.

The agreement signed by Mr. Albert Thibault, Deputy Chief of U.S. Mission in India and Dr. G. C. Srivastava, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, provides for U.S. Government funding of \$ 200,000 for providing equipment and training to State and national-level law enforcement agencies engaged in counter-narcotics operations.

*Drug control*  
Geographically, India is placed between the world's largest illicit opium producing countries. The agreement seeks to address trafficking of narcotics and precursor chemicals across India's international borders.

## Carrying Rs. 500 notes to Nepal an offence: IA

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 27.** Indian Airlines has advised all its passengers travelling to Nepal not to carry Rs. 500 denomination notes as they are banned in that country. In fact, possession of these notes in Nepal is an offence under Section 5 of the Foreign Exchange (Regulation) Act, 2019 (BS) (1962).

# Burma, Laos, Cambodia in drug wars

BY NOPPORN WONG-ANAN

**Bangkok, July 25:** Foreign ministers from Burma, Laos and Cambodia vowed on Tuesday to step up efforts to reduce drug production and trafficking in their countries.

Burma foreign minister Win Aung said his country has been actively suppressing production of opium and trafficking of methamphetamine in the country.

Burma is the world's second largest producer of opium and its derivative heroin, as well as a major source of amphetamines.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 33rd annual Association of South East Asian Nations ministerial meeting, Win Aung said his country supported an Asean plan to make the 10-nation zone drug free by 2015, which was agreed on Tuesday. Win Aung said Burma's military government encouraged farmers to grow substitute crops instead of opium and this had cut opium planting to 90,000 hectares, from 150,000 hectares three years ago.

Regional health officials have said Yangon has done little to suppress the drug trade.

Some even accuse the ruling generals of directly supporting and benefiting from the sale of narcotics, allegations the government denies. Thailand, which shares a border of more than 2,000 km with Burma, has complained frequently and loudly that drugs from Burma are flooding the country and pose a threat to the region.

The Thai Army said in June,

drugs production and trafficking from Burma was increasing rapidly posing a serious threat to Thailand and other countries in the region because of the mass relocation of ethnic minorities in Burma over the past year.

Thailand security authorities have said an alliance between Yangon and an ethnic army, the United Wa State Army, will fuel sporadic conflicts along the Thai border and help expand the drug distribution network of the UWSA into Thailand.

Win Aung denied the allegations. "We never supported them. We don't have any intention to make any trouble for Thai people. That is our political will," he said.

Win Aung said methamphetamine, often known in its crystallised form as Ice, was not Myanmar's "initial problem" because it started in Thailand, where the base chemical was produced. He said Burma had seized over 17 million methamphetamine pills and 60,000 litres of the precursor chemical this year.

He denied a report by a Thai security agency that as of May this year, about 50 methamphetamine factories were newly established inside Burma close to Thai border and 10 others had been set up in Laos also close to the Thai border.

"The border is under our control, there are none of those there," he told reporters. Laos said it was working with the UN Drug Control Programme to raise about \$80 million for a joint-programme of crop substitution. (Reuters)



**AGAINST DRUGS:** Indonesian foreign minister Alwi Shihab (right) talks to the media as he arrives for a second day of talks at the 33rd Asean ministerial meeting in Bangkok on Tuesday. Mr Shihab condemned on Tuesday the killing of a New Zealand soldier in East Timor by suspected pro-Jakarta militia and said his nation would help investigate the incident. (Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE

26 JUL 2000

# 'Taliban backing drug trafficking in Caucasus'

Udayan Namboodiri  
New Delhi, September 10

THE RUSSIAN government's 'White Paper' on Chechnya makes it amply clear that the Taliban, which controls most of Afghanistan is the prime source of "material support" for terrorism and drug trafficking between the Himalayas and the Caucasus.

The document states that an understanding between Saudi billionaire Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban on the one hand and between Chechen warlords Raduyev, Basayev and Israpilov led to the super-profitable trade of opium and heroin which funds the activities of fundamentalists and terrorists in the region.

This causes concern not only to Russia but the western world as well. Russia and the United States signed an agreement earlier this year to institutionalise a system of regular security dialogue. India has also been won over as an ally by these countries in the war against drug trafficking. Britain's Home Secretary, Jack Straw, now on a tour of India has agreed to the Indian proposal to have a Joint Working Group (JWG) to curb this menace.

The Russian government's 'White

Paper' mentions that though the Koran expressly forbids drug production, the Chechens found a useful excuse to get around the diktat. Mavladi Udugov, the chief separatist ideologue, justified the business saying drugs are "weapons" for the Chechens who have no other and face a "formidable aggressor armed to the teeth" (Russia).

Young Chechens were indoctrinated to the belief that the drug trade could "deprave the infidels" and therefore contributed to the 'Holy War'. Small factories sprung up based on the regular supply of raw opium from Afghanistan in and around Grozny, the Chechen capital.

The processed drugs found markets all over Europe and in Latin American countries. This movement was controlled under Basayev and involved several airports and landing strips in Chechnya, Azerbaijan and Pakistan. The Russian authorities claim to have seized data which conclusively prove that Osama Bin Laden was in direct contact with Chechen leaders. The Chechens' trail goes out of Russia into Georgia where an attempt was made on the life of President Eduard Shevardnadze.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1.1 SEP 2000

# Golden triangle drugs in Bengal

BY KOUNTEYA SINHA

**Kolkata, June 23:** Cocaine, heroin, ganja and opium from the "golden triangle" of Laos, Thailand and Indonesia are eating their way into Bengal. The Narcotic Control Bureau has sounded a red alert and will monitor areas like Dankuni, Berhampur, Burdwan and Liluah for drug traffickers.

Drugs from these countries are first sent to the Northeast from where they reach other states with good markets, like West Bengal, Gujarat, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Rajasthan.

Authorities say city areas like Sonagachhi, Babughat, Beliaghata and Chinatown have become dens for drug mafia lords, mostly from Hyderabad and Mumbai. The NCB regional headquarters in Kolkata on Wednesday arrested three Gujarati drug dealers: Praveen Chandra Mehta, Sailesh Shaw and Binod Kumar Jain from

Chinatown. Authorities suspect they were in Kolkata to lure youngsters into the trade.

NCB assistant director A. Hore said: "Drug trafficking is a social malady. It has become highly profitable. Youngsters join the trade for fast money and slowly get addicted to drugs."

NCB authorities will hold awareness campaigns in slums where the percentage of drug addicts is higher. They will put up posters and use television. "Illiteracy is one of the main reasons behind people taking to drugs," Mr Hore said.

The department officials have been holding meetings with the state excise and central excise, customs and city police departments. People caught trafficking ganja and opium face imprisonment up to 10 years and a fine of Rs 1 lakh. NCB officials say huge amounts of heroin has been flooding the state markets. A kilo of quality heroine can cost up to Rs 2.5 lakhs.

THE ASIAN AGE

24 JUN 2000

# Narco-terrorist network exposed

PRASHANT PANDEY  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 28.

CHHAGAN Khatri, alias Salim, a truck-driver from San-  
chaur in Rajasthan, has been in the  
business of delivering drugs for the  
past two years. His last assignment  
was to deliver 22kg of drugs to vari-  
ous parts of the country. He trans-  
ported drugs worth Rs 33 crore in  
the illegal international market.  
Khatri got Rs 10,000 per kg.

He is just a small link in the drug  
network which spreads across  
countries. The seizure of 4 kg of  
heroin by the Narcotics Control  
Board last night near Delhi-Ra-  
jasthan border has exposed a drug  
trafficking network which may even  
have terrorist connections.

In the latest seizure made last  
night in Rajokari on the Delhi-  
Jaipur highway, an Afghan and a  
Pakistani along with four Indians,  
have been detained. Officials say  
that their modus operandi has been  
similar to the ones in the past.

Says the Zonal Director of

NCB, Delhi Zonal Unit, Abrar  
Ahmed: "The consignment origi-  
nated in Afghanistan from where it  
was brought to Pakistan and later to  
India from Jalore on the Rajasthan-  
Gujarat border." The transporta-  
tion is done under cover of dark-  
ness. The packets are ferried one at  
a time across the sealed border,  
Ahmed says. Carried on camel-  
backs into the border city of Jalore,  
the consignment is then routed to  
different destinations.

In the latest incident, the desti-  
nation for the heroin confiscated  
was Mumbai from where it was  
scheduled to be handed over to one  
Ahmed Raja, who, in turn, was to  
have passed it on to the LTTE in Sri  
Lanka.

As a testimony to the strength of  
these 'channels' is the fact that the  
latest seizure is part of a bigger con-  
signment of 183 kg. "We are opti-  
mistic that we will recover all of it,  
but it is not easy," he says.

Apart from heroin and drugs,  
fake currency is also smuggled into  
India.

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 JUN 2000

# Sinha issues warning against trans-border drug trafficking

By Our Legal Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 5.** The Union Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, today cautioned the nation against destabilising efforts from across the border (particularly from Pakistan) through drug trafficking and counterfeiting of currency.

Addressing a seminar on the "role of judicial process in the drive against smuggling and drug trafficking", here, Mr. Sinha said the recent seizures had proved that most of the drugs caught had origins in Pakistan. "Such activities are not only anti-India, but also anti-humanity," he said.

Pointing out that globalisation and technological changes had resulted in the coming together of criminals, terrorists and smugglers of the world, he said efforts had to be made to prevent any weakness from permeating into the law of the land. "Besides punishing the law-breakers, it is essential to forfeit their assets."

The Prevention of Money Laundering Bill was introduced keeping all this in mind and it was now before the Select Committee of Parliament. Mr. Sinha expressed confidence that the Committee

would send its recommendations to the Government soon and it would be possible to pass the Bill in the Budget session after incorporating them.

He called upon the enforcement agencies to take note of the latest development in the law as interpreted by the judiciary. He also sought the judiciary's help in reducing the delays in cases relating to drug trafficking.

Inaugurating the seminar, the Chief Justice of India, Dr. Justice A. S. Anand, said illegal drug trafficking had become extremely attractive because of the big money involved.

Smuggling and drug trafficking had assumed such proportions that they had attracted the attention of all the nations for an urgent need to tackle the menace with adequate measures because the menace of harmful drugs was a global phenomena.

Expressing concern at the large number of acquittals in cases relating to the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the CJI said most of the acquittals were due to witnesses not supporting the prosecution case. Investigators should be held responsible for failure of cases;

where the failure was attributable to their acts of omission or commission.

## Drug menace in TN

Mr. Justice V. S. Sirpurkar, judge of the Madras High Court, who presented a paper, explained through statistics the drug menace threatening Tamil Nadu, particularly in Madurai, Pudukottai, Coimbatore, Salem and Chennai. Of the offences under the NDPS Act, ganja cases topped the list and the quantity involved was alarmingly high.

One reason which might have given impetus to the ganja trade in the State was the liberal use of the authorities of the preventive detention measures as against the bootleggers. "A fresh look in respect of the detention policy will be necessary," he said and added that more rigorous steps would be required for locating the ganja cultivation and curbing the same.

Mr. Justice J. Easwara Prasad, Chairman, Appellate Tribunal for Forfeited Property and the Finance Secretary, Mr. P.G. Manakad, were among those who spoke at the seminar attended by senior government officials, judges and judicial officers.