

Manipur becoming safe haven for opium trade

IMPHAL, Nov. 11. — A recent haul of a huge consignment of contraband *ganja* from Senapati district has revealed a bumper production of *ganja* and poppy in Manipur.

The haul — 4,260 kilograms worth Rs 1.65 crore in international market, is the largest by Imphal Narcotic Control Bureau in the recent times. The seizure once again revealed that more and more areas in deep jungles of Manipur are being used for *ganja* plantation which has become an easy source of income.

According to NCB officials traditional *jhum* cultivators are turning to

poppy plantation as it has become easy sources of income. NCB Imphal assistant director Mr Chance Keishing said that *ganja* originating from Manipur have high international value as it is considered high grade. "The current catch have been calculated at Rs 2,500 per kg as against international rate of Rs 4,000-5,000. Even then it has run into crores," he said.

NCB intelligence officer Mr Lalthangliem who had recently infiltrated into jungles of Churachandpur and Chandel district said he has also detected small patches of poppy plantation which was unheard of

in Manipur. "Though there are cases of poppy plantation in Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh, we did not think there could be plantation in southern district of Churachandpur. Opium products from these plantation probably go to the Golden Triangle through Myanmar as there exist no Heroin manufacturing plant in Manipur," he said.

Mr Langthanliem also said *ganja* production from Churachandpur district is taken by porters, who share profit with growers, in headloads border town of Jiribam from then to Silchar and beyond. — SNS

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THE STATESMAN

*Drug
Traf*

Multinational narcotics racket busted

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BEIJING, July 14. — In a joint operation, police forces of China, India, the USA and Hong Kong have smashed a major multinational narcotics ring and seized huge quantities of contraband, a senior Chinese police official said today.

The Deputy Secretary-

General of the China National Narcotics Control Commission, Mr Yang Fengrui, told reporters that the case was a good example for international cooperation in cracking down on cross-border drugs trade.

On 16 May, police forces from China, the United States of

America, India and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China jointly smashed the '125' multinational drug ring, capturing 28 criminal suspects, Mr Yang, also the Director-General of Bureau of Narcotics Control of the ministry of Public Security, said.

Police also seized 40.2 kg of heroin, over 80 grams of 'ice' and 35 kgs of ephedrine from the suspects.

Mr Yang said they received good cooperation from their Indian counterparts in raiding a drug manufacturing factory in the country. — PTI

U.S. to continue cooperation on drug trafficking

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 1. The State Department says that the United States will continue to explore opportunities to work with the Government of India in addressing issues of drug trafficking, including production and transnational crimes of common concern.

"The GOI [Government of India] says it is increasingly concerned over the nexus between drug trafficking and terrorism. The GOI has recognised the need for stronger drug control efforts nationally, particularly in the North-East," the State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report notes.

In a generally positive assessment, including on the efforts to tighten measures around licit production of

opium and in coming to grips with the growing problem of trafficking from across the borders, the State Department stressed that the decision to move the Narcotics Control Board from under the control of the Finance Ministry to that of the Home Ministry "will enhance the U.S. relationship with the Ministry's training division... in particular, by streamlining law enforcement training to India's police and the NCB." According to the report, NCB's shift to the Home Ministry will only enhance the agency's law enforcement capabilities, besides bolstering its professionalism.

The International Narcotics Control Strategy Report is prepared by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the State Department and highlights

the global problems and challenges, including a country-to-country assessment. The report also takes on the issue of narcotics-related money laundering and its implications.

The report, in its section on India, talks about various aspects, including the amendment in October 2001 of the "stringent" Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act of 1985. In Washington's view, this had resulted in "significant flexibility" to the sentences structure of narcotics-related offences in India.

The NCB had seized some 670 kg of heroin through November 2003 and the majority of this came from South India. "Cocaine debuted with several small seizures confirming what news reports and law enforcement agencies said for several years — that cocaine is available in India on the

wealthy party circuit, particularly in Mumbai and New Delhi," the report said.

The report drew attention to the fact that the media regularly reported allegations of corruption against law enforcement personnel, elected politicians and Cabinet-level Ministers. "The United States receives reports of narcotics-related corruption, but lacks the information to confirm those reports... It is a reasonable assumption in a poor country like India that corruption does play some role in narcotics trafficking, despite the Government's best efforts," it said.

It noted that even though trafficking patterns might have changed, India was historically an important transit area for heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan and to a lesser degree from South East Asia.