



NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU – PRESS NOTE (23.08.2019)

ENHANCED ACTIVITY BY THE NCB TO COUNTER DRUG TRAFFICKING

Background:

In the last few months India has witnessed a large increase of opiate trafficking originating from Afghanistan which is reaching the country through every conceivable route – land, air and sea. This appears to be a fallout of the bumper production of illicit opium and heroin in Afghanistan during the years 2017 at 2018. It is estimated that close to 9000 metric tons of opium was produced in Afghanistan during the year 2017. This will translate into a potential heroin yield of about 1000 metric tons.

There are three routes possible for trafficking of such heroin from Afghanistan to other parts of the world. The first is the northern route, which is through the Central Asian republics into Russia and then to Western Europe. The second is the 'Balkan' route which is via Iran into Turkey and then to Europe. The third is the southern route which includes trafficking of heroin through Pakistan into India as also the use of the sea route for trafficking into India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Eastern Africa. The statistics published by the UNODC indicate that there has been a decrease in heroin seizures is being affected in the northern route. Accordingly, it appears that the trafficking through the southern route has increased of late.

Consequently, different Indian enforcement agencies have seized extremely large quantities of heroin in the past few months. The Delhi police itself have seized about 330 kg of Afghan heroin smuggled through novel modus operandi in a chain of three seizures in the last month. In the month of June 532 KG of illicit heroin was seized from a consignment of rocksalt which was imported through ICP Atari from Pakistan. Earlier to that, a seizure of nearly 200 KG of heroin had been made from a boat, in the Gujarat coast by the DRI. Even earlier about 100 KG had been seized in a similar manner by the ATS Gujarat.

The report on the 'Magnitude of Substance Use in India 2019' published by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in February 2019 indicates a large increase in the number of opiate users in the country, which are likely to be using the opiates being trafficked in this manner. As per this report there

are about 2.3 crore people in the country in the age group of 10 to 75 that had consumed some form of opiates during the previous year. Of these 77 lakh people are in need for treatment for opioid dependence. Further, 20 lakh people are dependent users who would be consuming heroin every day. At conservative estimates of the quantum of heroin being consumed by such users, it appears that they would be consumption of about 36 metric tons of relatively pure heroin every year in the country. This would be getting sourced either from other countries (Afghanistan/ Myanmar) or through domestic illicit production.

Therefore apart from the supply factor the country has a large demand of such opiates.

NCB and Ministry Action:

Concerned about such developments, the Narcotics Control Bureau has significantly stepped up its engagement in the state of Punjab. Additional manpower in the State has been deployed headed by year officer of the rank of deputy director-general and several operations are being carried out in the state which have led to good results. Coordination with other agencies like the drug controller and state police is also being maintained to ensure that all aspects of the problem are addressed.

Besides, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order on 20th July 2019 setting up of a joint coordination committee for monitoring of the major drug cases in the country under the chairmanship of DG NCB. The mandate of this committee is to monitor all aspects of the major cases including their linkage to other crimes such as terrorism, money laundering et cetera. The need for this committee was also felt after the experience of the seizure effected by Amritsar customs, which has subsequently been also handed over to the NIA for exploring the possible terror nexus.

Shri Rakesh Asthana, DG, BCAS who has been assigned the additional charge of the DG NCB recently chaired the first joint coordination committee meeting very soon after his joining.

Achievements of NCB in the last week:

- (A) **Achievements in Punjab:** In Punjab, special drive against absconding offenders have met with few successes in last 2 days with further seizure and apprehensions.
- a. NCB Chandigarh was successful in apprehending an absconding accused and in follow up action, NCB Chandigarh seized 50,000 Tablets and 46,400 capsules containing TRAMADOL on 23.08.2019 from a premises in Haridwar in the

presence of the said accused. Earlier, on 06.05.2019, NCB Chandigarh had seized 1,20,000 tablets/capsules containing Tramadol in this case from Ludhiana.

- b. NCB Amritsar was successful in apprehending an accused absconding since 4.9.2018 in a case of seizure of 60 kg Heroin effected by NCB Jammu zone. The said person was apprehended while delivering 9 gm of heroin to a receiver. Both have been arrested. Their interrogation has led to inputs regarding other traffickers and operation to nab them is under way.
- c. **In another major success in Punjab, acting upon a specific input NCB Chandigarh team intercepted a Truck along with 2 persons and an additional 2 persons who were the receivers with a Etios car on 22.08.2019 and effected a seizure of 351.910 Kg Poppy Husk concealed underneath Sanitary ware items. Source of the drug is Rajasthan, and destination is Kharar, Mohali, Punjab.**

(B) **Achievements in the rest of the country:**

- a. **Another Afghan heroin case busted: Acting on human intelligence NCB Delhi apprehended 2 afghan nationals suspected to be swallower of heroin in form of capsules. On 20.08.19 the accused expelled 770 gm and 650 gm heroin respectively. They revealed that the supplier of the heroin, was on his way to India on 21.8.19 from Afghanistan. NCB sleuths apprehended him at IGI airport and during interrogation he revealed the names of 2 his clients, both afghan nationals residing in India. Both were apprehended on 22.08.19. Investigations with them lead to a Nigerian national and his brother from whom additional 3.4 kg heroin was recovered. Both of them have been apprehended to expose the entire network of Afghani a Nigerian traffickers involved in the case.**
- b. In a major drug haul, officials of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Indore Zonal Unit effected a seizure of 54.680 kgs Ganja on 17.08.2019 during an operation launched on specific information from NCB Lucknow Zonal Unit. The drug was seized near Maksudangarh, Guna, Madhya Pradesh from one Wagon R car bearing Haryana registration number. The drug was concealed in false cavities of the car. NCB also arrested two Indian drug traffickers who later revealed that this illegal ganja is sourced from Andhra Pradesh and it was destined to New Delhi. It is revealed that the arrested drug traffickers are known to be smuggling the Ganja from long time in the aforementioned area. This is the second big ganja seizure in a week by the NCB

Indore Zonal Unit. On 13 August, 2019, NCB Indore Zonal Unit had seized 105.886 Kg Ganja near Dudhiya, Indore, Madhya Pradesh after arresting two drug traffickers.

- c. In North Eastern Region, NCB Guwahati Zonal Unit acting on specific information seized **9 kg Methamphetamine** from Khudengthabi, Manipur. One Indian drug trafficker of Manipur was arrested. The accused was trafficking the drugs in Toyota Corolla Altis car bearing Haryana registration. The drug is sourced from Moreh, Manipur and was destined to Imphal, Manipur. Further investigation is under process.
- d. In another case, NCB Guwahati seized **8 kg Heroin/ Brown Sugar** from Khudengthabi, Manipur on 19.08.2019 and arrested one drug trafficker of Manipur. The drug was concealed in a Silver coloured EECO Van bearing Assam registration number beneath the rear seat. The drug is sourced from Tegnaupal in Manipur and was destined to Imphal in Manipur.
- e. On 21 Aug 2019, NCB Guwahati in coordination with RPF Rangia, Assam seized **78.6 kg Ganja** from Arunachal Express at Rangia and arrested two drug traffickers of Udalguri, Assam who were trafficking the drugs to Gorakhpur (UP). The source of the drug is West Kameng , Arunachal Pradesh.
- f. **The Kolkata Zonal Unit of NCB seized approx 10,000 Yaba tablets (weighing approx 1 kg) on 21/22 Aug 2019 on NH 34 at Omarpur Bus Stand, Murshidabad, West Bengal. Three Indian nationals were arrested in the case. Team also seized 03 bikes and FICN (Fake Indian Currency Notes) having denomination of 1,90,000/-. The suspected source of the seized drug is Murshidabad (West Begal). Preliminary investigation revealed that the trafficking was being coordinated by a person who is presently lodged in jail. One of the arrested drug traffickers has registered criminal cases of arms & cattle smuggling against him.**
- g. Based on specific intelligence, NCB Mumbai Zonal Unit seized 7 kg Charas on 21 Aug 2019 and arrested 02 Indian drug traffickers from Nagour, Rajasthan and Thane, Mumbai in the case. Source of seized drug is Jammu & Kashmir and was destined to Thane, Mumbai.

Further investigation is under way in all of the above cases. The aforesaid cases are a result of increased interdiction efforts against drug trafficking by NCB.

DDG (Operations)
Narcotics Control Bureau.