



Narcotics Control Bureau

Press Release

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- **NCB Launches “Operation WIPE” to Curb Online Drug Trafficking Networks**

In a significant step towards tackling the growing threat of online drug trafficking, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has launched “Operation WIPE” (Web-based Illicit Activities Prevention & Enforcement). The operation aims to prevent the misuse of online platforms for the illegal sale and distribution of pharmaceutical drugs regulated under the NDPS Act.

The initiative builds upon the success of an earlier crackdown in July 2025 under Operation MED-MAX, wherein NCB dismantled a highly sophisticated transnational drug trafficking syndicate operating across Asia, North America, Europe, and Australia with the help of US DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) , AFP (Australian Federal Police) and other Foreign Drug Law Enforcement Agencies . The operation was conducted based on the input jointly developed by US DEA and NCB India . This case which originated from the seizure of 3.7 kg of tramadol tablets in India , uncovered an organised network that exploited digital platforms to conduct illicit business.

Investigations revealed that the syndicate operated a call centre in Udupi, Karnataka, which handled global orders through a leading online B2B platform. Pharmaceutical drugs regulated under the NDPS Act were listed online, and customers were contacted directly for supply without any legitimate documentation. Payments were routed through cryptocurrencies, PayPal, and other remittance channels, while international re-shippers were used for last-mile delivery. Coordinated efforts with global

partners led to multiple arrests, identification of the kingpin based in the UAE, and enforcement actions abroad, including seizures and dismantling of clandestine facilities.

Drawing on these insights, Operation WIPE focuses on proactive monitoring of the surface web to detect and disrupt similar illegal activities. The operation is supported by intelligence inputs from the International Narcotics Control Board's SNOOP (Scanning Novel Opioids on Online Platforms) programme.

Under this initiative, NCB has identified 122 instances involving 62 substances, including commonly abused drugs such as Clonazepam, Diazepam, and Fentanyl. Of these, 58 substances fall under the NDPS Act, while four are classified as controlled substances.

NCB has issued formal notices to concerned online platforms, directing them to take immediate action to prevent misuse of their services. A comprehensive list of NDPS-regulated substances has also been shared to enable proactive identification and removal of such listings. Following verification, platforms like India MART , Tradeindia and Dial4Trade have taken corrective measures, including removal of flagged products and suspension of suspicious vendors.

The NCB's technical teams are continuing to monitor the surface web using advanced tools and international intelligence inputs to identify emerging threats and ensure timely intervention.

Operation WIPE marks a strategic shift from reactive enforcement to proactive prevention, where illegal listings are detected and removed before they translate into actual trafficking. This approach strengthens India's ability to combat drug networks operating in both physical and digital domains.

This initiative reflects the Government of India's zero-tolerance policy against narcotics and its unwavering commitment to dismantling drug trafficking networks. NCB remains steadfast in its mission to safeguard society from the menace of drugs.

Citizens are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious listings or sale of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, or controlled pharmaceuticals on online marketplaces, social media platforms, or websites. Information regarding such illegal

online activities may be shared through the MANAS – National Narcotics Helpline (Toll-Free No. 1933). Specific details such as links, screenshots, seller information, or transaction modes can greatly assist enforcement agencies in taking swift action. The identity of informants is kept strictly confidential.

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