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NCB's Major Action: Illegal Cannabis and Opium Cultivation Destroyed Across Five States

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Mains: General Studies III (internal security, drug-trafficking networks); Prelims: NCB, NDPS Act, Vision Document 2026-2029



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What is the news

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), working alongside state police, paramilitary forces and other enforcement agencies, has undertaken a series of operations across the country against illegal cannabis and opium cultivation. The operations span forest land, remote hill districts and community lands. They are part of the strategy under the Ministry of Home Affairs' 'Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029)', launched on 26 June 2026 at the 10th Apex NCORD Committee meeting (detailed analysis available in the site's earlier article).

Key operations

Arunachal Pradesh (26 October-3 November)

In a joint operation by the NCB, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), the state Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF), state police and the West Kameng district administration, over 1.37 lakh kg of cannabis plants spread across about 458 acres were destroyed. The cultivation was mainly on community lands.

Tripura (16 October)

About 37,000 cannabis plants over 25 acres of forest land were destroyed in the Radhanagar forest area, Debipur and Urangan Bari in Sepahijala district. The CRPF, Border Security Force (BSF), Tripura Police, Forest Department and Tripura State Rifles took part.

Himachal Pradesh (September-October)

About 592 acres of illicit cannabis cultivation were identified and cleared in Kullu. Teams of the NCB, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), state police and Forest Department operated at altitudes of 2,100-3,050 metres, in rain and fog, reaching sites inaccessible by road. The operation was later extended towards Kasol, and another NCB team began work in Chamba district.

Rajasthan

In Nayawas village of Kotra in Udaipur district, 7,577 cannabis plants in 9.4 bighas were detected and destroyed; the estimated potential yield was about 2,273 kg of ganja. Earlier, in March, about 170 acres of illicit opium cultivation were eliminated in the remote tribal and hilly areas of Samoli, Khuna and Pipli in Kotda tehsil, Udaipur, with an estimated value of ₹275 crore.

Other states

In February, 180 acres of illicit opium cultivation on forest land were destroyed in the Lawalong area of Chatra, Jharkhand. In Gujarat, Rajkot rural police seized over 250 plants and 705.49 kg of cannabis. On 14 November, Assam Rifles and Manipur Police destroyed illicit opium poppy cultivation. In March, over 4,344 kg of opium plants were seized in Balrampur, Chhattisgarh.

Coordination and capacity building

- **13 November:** the NCB held a hybrid-mode session in Odisha on intelligence collection and identification of illicit cannabis cultivation, with about 1,500 CRPF personnel from 25 stations participating.
- **11 November:** Odisha's third quarterly State-level Joint Coordination Committee meeting was held in Bhubaneswar, senior officials of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Customs, Income Tax Department, State Intelligence Bureau, CRPF, BSF, RPF, state ANTF and Excise Department attended. Intelligence sharing, financial investigations and progress under 'Mission Zero Cultivation' were discussed.

Related reading: Drug Control: Vision Document 2026-2029

Strategic background

The MHA's Vision Document (2026-2029) shifts the focus from seizure-and-arrest action to dismantling entire trafficking networks. For illicit cultivation, it provides for detection through satellite imagery and hotspot mapping, coordinated destruction drives and alternative livelihoods for affected farmers. Implementation follows a 'Whole of Government, Whole of Society' approach through the NCORD mechanism.

Why it matters for the exam

- Prelims: the NCB's role, participation of forces such as CRPF-SSB-BSF-ITBP, key figures (458 acres/1.37 lakh kg; 592 acres in Kullu; 170 acres/₹275 crore in Udaipur).
- Mains: drug trafficking and internal security, illegal cultivation in border states, the question of alternative livelihoods, a direct GS-III (internal security) topic.

Prelims Practice Questions

Question 1. With reference to recent operations against illegal narcotic cultivation, consider the following statements:

Statement 1: In a joint operation in West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh, cannabis plants spread across about 458 acres were destroyed.

Statement 2: The area of illicit cultivation cleared in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, was about 592 acres.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

▼ **Answer and Explanation**

Correct answer: (c)

In the joint operation in West Kameng (26 October-3 November), over 1.37 lakh kg of cannabis plants across about 458 acres were destroyed. In Kullu, about 592 acres of illicit cultivation were cleared during September-October.

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Question 2. On which date was the MHA's 'Vision Document on Narcotics Control (2026-2029)' launched?

(a) 26 January 2026

(b) 26 June 2026

(c) 15 August 2026

(d) 2 October 2026

▼ **Answer and Explanation**

Correct answer: (b)

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the document was launched on 26 June 2026 during the 10th Apex NCORD Committee meeting. 26 June is also observed as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Mains Practice Question

"Illegal narcotic cultivation in India is not merely a law-and-order issue, but one of internal security and the rural economy." Comment with reference to the recent operations. (250 words)

Answer Outline

Introduction:

An introduction to the NCB's recent multi-state operations; reference to the Vision Document (2026-2029).

Main Body:

(a) security dimension: trafficking networks linked to illegal cultivation and their possible connection with arms and terror financing; (b) economic-social dimension: why cultivation persists in remote tribal-hilly areas, poverty and lack of legal livelihoods; use of community land; (c) strengths of the response: multi-agency coordination, technological detection (satellite/hotspots), training; (d) challenges: difficult terrain, risk of re-cultivation, need to link with the demand-side strategy of the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan.

Conclusion:

A sustainable solution lies in combining destruction drives with alternative livelihoods and demand reduction.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is the NCORD mechanism?

The Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) arrangement was set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs on 22 November 2016 for coordination among central and state stakeholders on drug enforcement; on 29 July 2019 it was restructured into a four-tier structure, the Apex Committee (chaired by the Union Home Secretary, meeting half-yearly), the Executive Committee (chaired by the Special Secretary (IS), meeting quarterly), and state-level and district-level committees.

What is 'Mission Zero Cultivation'?

A state-level campaign approach to reduce illegal cannabis and opium cultivation to zero, combining regular monitoring of identified areas, destruction drives and alternative livelihoods; in Odisha its progress is reviewed by the State-level Joint Coordination Committee.

Why are so many security forces involved in operations against illegal cultivation?

Cultivation usually occurs in remote forest-hilly and border areas, so joint operations by the NCB with the CRPF, BSF, SSB, ITBP, state police and Forest Departments are essential, this is the 'Whole of Government' approach.

Sources

- www.mha.gov.in
- www.thehindu.com