New phase of counter-terrorism: cyber, narcotics and radicalisation hotspots under MAC



Original symbolic illustration: pcsmantra.com

News reference: 19 November 2026 | Published: 20 November 2026 Prelims: internal security institutions, MAC, NIA, UAPA Mains: GS Paper-III (internal security)

What happened -

Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated a two-day counter-terrorism conference in New Delhi on 19 November 2026 and announced that the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) has been reorganised to also cover cybersecurity, narcotics, organised crime networks and emerging radicalisation hotspots.

What MAC is -

- MAC is the centralised intelligence-sharing platform working under the Intelligence Bureau (IB)
- Conceptualised in 2001 after the Kargil war; fully operational since 2009
- Its methodology was restructured with new technology in 2023, with a 'National Memory Bank' centralised database

Other key points from the conference -

- After Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist Latif Bhat was killed, Kashmir was described as free of locally recruited India-born terrorists, a position reached after 35 years
- Since 2019, 303 fugitives have been brought back to India from 36 countries
- The Shahzad Bhatti network has been designated a terrorist organisation under UAPA; over 40 modules dismantled, 100+ cases, 271+ arrests
- NIA has been approved 16 new branch offices and two zonal offices; 70 new NIA Special Courts set up across the country
- The Home Minister released the NIA publication 'Fail-Safe Investigation', laid the foundation stone of the NIA office complex in Chandigarh, inaugurated the Maidan Garhi residential complex and e-launched NIA's 'Pushti' portal
- Every state's ATS was asked to strengthen its cyber-expert unit, and border states to work towards a Quadrangular Regional Security Grid

Prelims practice question

Consider the following statements:

Statement 1: The Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) is a centralised intelligence-sharing platform working under the Intelligence Bureau

Statement 2: MAC was first established after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks

Statement 3: In a recent reorganisation, cybersecurity and narcotics have also been brought under MAC

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 1 and 3 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer and explanation

Correct answer: (b)

Statement 1 is correct: MAC works under the IB as the central intelligence-sharing platform.

Statement 2 is incorrect: MAC was conceptualised in 2001 after the Kargil war, before 26/11 (2008); it became fully operational in 2009.

Statement 3 is correct: on 19 November 2026 it was announced that cybersecurity, narcotics, organised crime and radicalisation hotspots now fall under MAC.

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FAQ

Q: Which agency does MAC work under? A: The Intelligence Bureau (IB).

Q: What is the National Memory Bank? A: A centralised database created in MAC's 2023 restructuring.

Sources:

- https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2338703&lang=1&reg=48
- https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/emerging-radicalisation-hotspots-now-under-purview-of-multi-agency-centre-amit-shah/article71721389.ece