

'48% Afghan heroin routed through India'

Big Seizures Along Traditional Routes Main Reason

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New Delhi: India is fast emerging as an alternative to the traditionally popular route of Iran and the Balkan countries for the smuggling of heroin originating from Afghanistan, which supplies 92% of the world consumption.

The World Drug Report 2007, released by the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), estimates that 48% of the total heroin manufactured in Afghanistan is smuggled via Pakistan using India as the main transit route.

The emergence of the new trafficking route is the result of huge seizures made along the conventional routes along Iran, Turkey and Balkan countries. International drug syndicates, mostly involving African operators, have been recently using India as a major transit country for all Europe bound drug consignments.

This leaves a sizeable population along the trafficking routes vulnerable to drug addiction, says the UN report which has warned drug enforcement agencies here to carefully monitor the trend over the coming years as the country has high levels of poverty and HIV infected pop- ar, Laos and Thailand by 85%. ulations, the most vulnerable sections to the scourge.

In 2006, the total opium production in Afghanistan rose to 6,100 tonnes from 4,100 in 2005. A significant jump that also was reflected in huge seizures made in India in the last year by different anti-narcotics agencies. The drug report said that while opium poppy cultivation is increasing in Afghanistan, the same has come down significantly in the Golden Triangle region of Myanm-"At least in the short-term, conditions in the world's heroin markets will be determined by what happens in Afghanistan, as the country was responsible for 92% of global opium production in 2006," the UN report said. While 48% of Afghan heroin is estimated to have left via Pakistan and India, about 31% left through Iran, less than 21% through central Asia.

Just a few years ago, a majority of it was trafficked through Iran and central Asia.



POPPY SHAME: Traditionally, Iran, Turkey and Balkan countries are popular routes for smuggling of Afghan heroin