

## National

### **Rise in drug smuggling into India: U.N. report**

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The India-Pakistan border is increasingly being used for smuggling narcotics into India, a senior United Nations official said on Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference to mark the release of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2006 World Drug Report here, Gary Lewis, UNODC Representative for South Asia, said increased trans-border civilian movement could be one of the reasons.

#### **From Afghanistan**

According to data available with the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), 30 per cent of the drugs seized in the country during the last three years were produced in the remote areas of Afghanistan and reached here through the India-Pakistan border. Anti-narcotics squads in the country seized over 1,000 kg of Afghan-origin heroin and other drugs since 2002 compared to around 50 kg recovered during the height of India-Pakistan tensions in the preceding years, Mr. Lewis said.

"Confidence Building Measures adopted by India and Pakistan have led to movement of more people across the border and this can be one reason for the increase," he said.

Drug addiction among youngsters in Punjab was on the rise, he said, and pointed out that this was due to the flow of heroin and other drugs into the State from Pakistan.

In Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer, the area under poppy cultivation fell 21 per cent to 104,000 hectares in 2005, the first such decline since 2001.

"Afghanistan's drug situation remains vulnerable to reversal because of mass poverty, lack of security, and the fact that the authorities have inadequate control over its territory," he said.

The report expressed concern over the cocaine consumption in western Europe, which is reaching alarming levels.