

# UN report shows rise in heroin smuggling along Indo-Pak border

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GUNS may have remained cold at the Indo-Pak border for years now but it has had the unintended consequence of boosting the illicit trade in heroin, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has said.

"There is evidence that in parallel with the increasing confidence building measures between India and Pakistan, elements of uncivil society are using the new openness and increased movement of passengers and goods across the border to smuggle drugs originating from Afghanistan into India," Gary Lewis, representative of UNODC's South Asia branch, said while releasing the World Drug Report 2006.

Lewis was of the opinion that the increased inflow of the drug was proven from the enhanced quantity of seizures that has taken place since the past few years. He, however, felt that the situation in India as far as drug trafficking was concerned was not as alarming as in Afghanistan, Iran or Columbia.

According to UN figures, opium production has in-



Lewis with the report in New Delhi on Tuesday.

creased in Afghanistan and around 11,900 metric tonnes were produced during the last three years. The routes commonly used for the smuggling of the contraband are through the border at Punjab, according to officials of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). Packets of Afghani heroin are thrown across the barbed fencing to agents who subsequently send them to other destinations. But UNODC's conclusions could also mean that new routes are opening up in other parts that has fuelled more imports.

UNODC is working closely with both India and Pakistan to combat the menace which is in addition to the efforts made at

the bilateral level between the two countries. The UN agency inaugurated a programme I Decide yesterday in association with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The programme is aimed at creating awareness among the youth between 10 to 25 years of age group about the dangers of drug abuse.

Copies of the drug report released today will be given to key central ministries involved in checking drug trafficking. The UN agency will also urge the government to update the national survey on drug abuse in the country.