

Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) destroys 2995 hectares of illicit Cannabis (Ganja) cultivation Himachal Pradesh

“Operation HAMMER”

Press Note: 18/10/24

In one of the **biggest destruction operations conducted over 4 weeks in Himachal Pradesh, officers of Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) destroyed 2995 hectares of illicit Cannabis (Ganja) cultivation under OPERATION HAMMER.**

The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) is the Apex Drug Law Enforcement Agency under Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India tasked with identification and destruction of illicit cultivation of cannabis and Opium along with its other responsibilities.



Image 1- Illicit Cultivation of Cannabis (Ganja) on Slopes of Mountains (generally near summit).

On receiving specific intelligence about illicit Cannabis (*Ganja*) cultivation in Himachal Pradesh, multiple teams of officers of CBN were formed and dispatched. Officers of CBN verified the intelligence and further carried out physical surveys resulting in detection of more areas of illicit cultivation. Subsequently, destruction operation was started with support of District Administration, Forest Department and the Police in Kullu district.

CBN adopted a **multi-pronged approach** involving community mobilization, voluntary cooperation and strong law enforcement along with use of modern technologies.

Firstly, with focus on Narcotics Control, the primary objective of the operation was to destroy the widespread illegal cannabis cultivation that fuels the narcotics supply chain in India. The district's lush, remote & rugged terrain has long been exploited for the growth of this illegal crop by the drug traffickers. This successful intervention sends a strong message against drug trafficking and illegal narcotics activities in the region.

Six teams of CBN Officers were simultaneously allotted different areas of operation and given the flexibility to work jointly in certain areas with large illicit cultivation of cannabis. Officials from Forest department, Revenue & Police also accompanied teams in light of sensitive nature of operation. It is noteworthy to mention that since this is a season of apple & pomegranate harvesting, labour availability was a problem but it failed to deter the grit and determination of CBN teams which swung into action and conducted destruction operation in hostile terrain and weather conditions. The situation was further exacerbated by incessant rain few days before commencement of the operation which destroyed several roads leading to area under cultivation and thus making them almost inaccessible. Despite such adverse conditions, the officers of CBN climbed daily up to 11,000 feet above sea level and even camped in sensitive areas to expedite the destruction of illicit cultivation of cannabis.

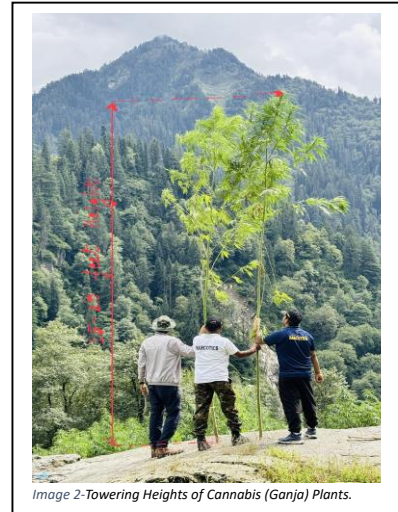


Image 2-Towering Heights of Cannabis (Ganja) Plants.



Image 3- Team CBN.

Secondly, to ensure effective and precise targeting, **advanced technologies** were deployed during the assessment and mapping of cannabis cultivation. Drones and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) were used to identify hotspots and assess the extent of illegal cultivation, allowing the officers of CBN to strategize and implement focused interventions in the affected areas.



Image 4- Massive tracts of illicit cultivation of Cannabis (Ganja).

Thirdly, significant element of this operation was the **voluntary cooperation from local communities**. Through extensive awareness campaigns, residents of Kullu were mobilized to support law enforcement efforts. Their active participation in reporting suspicious activities and helping the bureau identify illegal cultivations was key to the success of operation Hammer.



Image 5- Team CBN with officials from Administration, Police & Forest along with labours.

In parallel with the operation, CBN launched **public awareness campaigns** to educate the masses about the dangers of drug abuse and the legal consequences of cannabis cultivation in affected belt. This effort received widespread attention from the residents, fostering a sense of responsibility within the community to discourage such illegal activities.



Image 6- Public awareness campaigns for residents with special focus on educating women.

Lastly, as a show of coordinated effort, CBN **received active support** by the Office of District Collector, Chief Conservator of Forest and Superintendent of Police, Kullu in terms of logistics, manpower and security throughout the operation.

CBN has conducted destruction operation in many other states like West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Uttarakhand etc., resulting in destruction of more than 40,000 hectares of illicit cultivation of Opium and Cannabis over the years. **CBN had destroyed approximately 4726 hectares of Illicit Opium in Arunachal Pradesh in the month of February and March and 351 hectares off illicit Opium in Uttarakhand in the month of May this year.** CBN intends to continue such destruction operations of illicit cultivation across India in future as well and reaffirms its commitment to combating the illegal narcotics trade and fostering a drug-free environment for the future.
