Defence & Security · GS - III

India’s proximity to two of the world’s biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle; organised crime; arms trafficking; money laundering; human trafficking; border management; financial intelligence; international cooperation

Model Answer

Introduction

India’s proximity to the Golden Crescent, comprising Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and the Golden Triangle, associated with Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, exposes it to transnational narcotics networks. Drug trafficking often finances and facilitates other forms of organised crime.

Linkages Between Illicit Activities

1. **Drug trafficking and gunrunning:** Criminal networks use overlapping smuggling routes to move narcotics and weapons. Drug profits may finance arms purchases for criminal groups and insurgents.

2. **Money laundering:** Traffickers conceal proceeds through cash-intensive businesses, shell companies, trade-based laundering and informal transfer systems.
3. **Human trafficking:** Vulnerable people may be coerced into transporting drugs, exploited in forced labour or sexually exploited by criminal networks.
4. **Terrorism and insurgency:** Narcotics revenues can support violent organisations, destabilising border regions and threatening internal security.
5. **Corruption:** Bribery of officials and intermediaries helps criminal networks evade detection and weaken law enforcement.
6. **Cyber-enabled crime:** Encrypted communications and digital financial channels can facilitate coordination and conceal payments.

Countermeasures

- **Border security:** Strengthen surveillance, intelligence-led patrols and coordination among border forces, customs and state police.
- **Financial investigation:** Use financial intelligence, asset tracing and anti-money-laundering laws to disrupt criminal profits.
- **Inter-agency coordination:** Improve information-sharing among the Narcotics Control Bureau, enforcement agencies and state authorities.
- **International cooperation:** Enhance joint investigations, intelligence exchange and extradition cooperation with neighbouring countries.
- **Demand reduction:** Expand treatment, rehabilitation and public awareness to reduce drug dependence.
- **Victim protection:** Identify and rehabilitate trafficking victims through victim-centred law enforcement.
- **Technology:** Use forensic analysis, secure data systems and risk-based cargo screening.

Conclusion

Drug trafficking is part of a wider criminal ecosystem, not an isolated offence. An integrated strategy combining border management, financial disruption, international cooperation and public-health measures is essential.