

4. Major List 2025 – International Relations

Trump names Afghanistan, India, China, Pakistan among major drug transit, illicit drug producing countries. The U.S. has designated India as a major drug transit nation, highlighting its geographical vulnerability to trafficking from the Golden Crescent and Golden Triangle. This places scrutiny on India's counter-narcotics efforts, which are managed domestically through the NDPS Act and bodies like the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

U.S. Designates India Among Major Drug Transit Nations

In a significant international development, U.S. President Donald Trump has designated 23 countries, including India, China, and Pakistan, as major drug transit or illicit drug-producing nations. This annual "Major's List" identifies countries that are key sources or transit points for narcotics entering the United States, highlighting the global nature of the drug trade.

The "Major's List" of 2025

The designation is part of a formal process by the U.S. government to identify key nodes in the global narcotics supply chain.

Basis for Designation – A country's inclusion on the list is not necessarily a reflection of its government's counter-narcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the U.S. Instead, as the U.S. State Department clarified, the listing is primarily based on a combination of geographic, commercial, and economic factors that enable drug transit or production within its borders.

"Failed Demonstrably" Nations – Within the list, five countries—Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, and Venezuela—were specifically noted as having "failed demonstrably" to make substantial efforts in their counternarcotics actions over the past year.

List of Designated Countries – The 23 countries identified on the 2025 list are –

Afghanistan	Costa Rica	Haiti	Mexico
Bahamas	Dominican Republic	Honduras	Nicaragua
Belize	Ecuador	India	Pakistan
Bolivia	El Salvador	Jamaica	Panama
Burma	Guatemala	Laos	Peru
China		Venezuela	
Colombia			

Significance of the Designation for India

India's inclusion on this list, alongside its neighbours, carries several important implications.

Geopolitical Impact – Being listed with nations like China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan places pressure on India's global image. It can potentially affect perceptions of the country's internal security and law enforcement effectiveness, despite its domestic efforts to combat narcotics.

Focus on International Cooperation – The designation highlights the critical need for robust bilateral and multilateral coordination in drug control. It reinforces the importance of frameworks led by organizations like the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Intensified Domestic Scrutiny – India's presence on the list is likely to intensify scrutiny of its own drug control enforcement mechanisms. This is particularly relevant for regions vulnerable to trafficking from the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent.

Reinforces the Global Narrative – The list reinforces the U.S. position that the trafficking of illicit drugs and the diversion of synthetic precursors constitute both a severe public health crisis and a major national security challenge.

India's Proximity to Major Drug Hubs – A Comparative Look

India's geographical location places it between two of the world's largest opium and heroin-producing regions, making it highly vulnerable to trafficking and abuse.

Feature	Golden Crescent	Golden Triangle
Geography	A region overlapping the mountainous peripheries of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.	A border region where Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand meet.
Primary Drugs	Historically one of the world's largest opium and heroin producing regions.	The world's second-largest opium and heroin area, now increasingly shifting to synthetic drugs (methamphetamine).
Impact on India	Its proximity to Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, and Rajasthan makes these states highly vulnerable to heroin smuggling and the influence of cross-border drug cartels.	Its proximity to India's Northeast states (Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland) leads to high inflows of drugs, facilitated by porous borders and the involvement of insurgent networks.

India's Domestic Framework for Narcotics Control

India has a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to regulate and combat drug trafficking.

Primary Legislation - NDPS Act, 1985

The cornerstone of India's drug control policy is the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.

Overview - This Act is the primary legislation that regulates all operations related to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. It provides a stringent framework for the control, regulation, and punishment of drug-related offenses.

Key Amendments - The Act has been amended over the years to adapt to new challenges. Recent reforms have introduced increased penalties for synthetic drugs, enabled the forfeiture of property acquired through drug trafficking, and implemented stricter provisions against repeat offenders.

Regulation of Precursor Chemicals - To prevent the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, India actively monitors the production and trade of precursor chemicals (like ephedrine and pseudoephedrine) under the NDPS Act to prevent their diversion.

Key Institutional Mechanisms

Several specialized agencies are responsible for enforcing India's drug laws.

Institution	Parent Ministry / Department	Key Responsibilities
Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)	Ministry of Home Affairs	The apex national agency responsible for drug law enforcement, coordinating with state agencies and international bodies.
Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN)	Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance	Manages the licit cultivation of opium for medical purposes and works to prevent its diversion into the illicit market.
State Police & Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)	State Governments / Ministry of Finance	State police forces and the DRI play crucial roles in on-the-ground interdiction, investigation, and seizures of narcotics.

India's International Commitments

India is an active participant in global efforts to counter the drug trade.

UN Conventions - India is a signatory to all three major international drug treaties -

1. The 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs
2. The 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances
3. The 1988 Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances

Cooperation with Global Bodies - India actively cooperates within global frameworks established by the UNODC for drug control and the FATF for combating money laundering linked to drug trafficking.

Bilateral Agreements – To enhance cross-border cooperation, India has signed numerous bilateral agreements and treaties with key countries, including the U.S., Myanmar, and Afghanistan, for information sharing, capacity building, and joint law enforcement operations.

Source - [https - //www.thehindu.com/news/international/trump-names-afghanistan-india-china-pakistan-among-major-drug-transit-illicit-drug-producing-countries/article70064066.ece](https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/trump-names-afghanistan-india-china-pakistan-among-major-drug-transit-illicit-drug-producing-countries/article70064066.ece)

