

## UN cautions India against misuse of drugs

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**Singapore:** Top UN officials have underscored the rising trend of misuse of pharmaceutical drugs in India, after cannabis and heroin. They said that cheaper availability of pharmaceutical drugs was a major reason for the increased misuse.

According to a report, Ms Cristina Albertine, South Asia representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), has said that cannabis and heroin are easily available at cheaper rates in India, Nepal and Bangladesh.

She added that as India is very close to drug production sites like Afghanistan and Myanmar, no financial security was needed for people to buy drugs, and even common men like rickshaw pullers injected heroin to cope with life.

Ms Albertine mentioned that codeine-based cough syrups, diazepam and proxyvon are some of the pharmaceutical drugs that are quite popular among addicts. She said misuse of pharmaceutical drugs poses a serious problem for India and South Asian countries as many countries produce pharmaceutical products intended for therapeutic purposes.

India has over 70 million drug addicts, according to a survey conducted by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry and UNODC.