

DRI busts mobile mephedrone lab in Sahyadri Ranges under “Operation Sahyadri Checkmate”; seizes nearly 22 kg mephedrone in different forms; five arrested

Posted On: 25 JAN 2026 7:29PM by PIB Delhi

Working on a developed intelligence, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) launched an operation codenamed *Operation Sahyadri Checkmate* and dismantled a clandestine mobile mephedrone manufacturing laboratory in the remote hinterland of the Sahyadri ranges.

The illicit laboratory was designed to evade detection by frequently shifting locations. Surveillance led to the identification of a camouflaged manufacturing unit operating under the guise of a poultry farm. A coordinated operation launched by DRI on **24.01.2026** unearthed the makeshift, mobile and fully operational clandestine laboratory equipped with apparatus capable of manufacturing **Mephedrone** (NDPS substance).



A total of 21.912 kg mephedrone in different forms, comprising 11.848 kg in liquid form, 9.326 kg in semi-liquid form, and 738 grams in crystalline form was seized. In addition, 71.5 kg raw material, capable of producing approximately 15 kg finished NDPS substance, was also seized. The illicit market value of the seized NDPS substance is estimated to be approximately ₹55 crore.

DRI apprehended three individuals, including the ‘cook’ engaged in manufacturing; the financier-consigner; and the owner of the poultry farm. The first batch of finished NDPS contraband had been concealed at the residence of the poultry farm owner for safekeeping.

In a follow-up action, officers of DRI mounted late-night surveillance near an old octroi toll naka located inside a dense forested area and apprehended **two more individuals** en-route to collect the final product. It is pertinent to mention that out of the five individuals arrested, four are repeat offenders, having earlier been arrested under the NDPS Act or prosecuted under serious legislations such as MCOCA, 1999.

The successful operation underscores the critical role of DRI in safeguarding national security by disrupting organized drug trafficking networks that pose a serious threat to public health, law and order, and economic stability.

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(Release ID: 2218560) Visitor Counter : 3907

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