

# US major market for illegal online drug sales from India

Chethan Kumar | TNN | Updated: Apr 26, 2017, 11:51 IST



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A US embassy spokesperson from Delhi told TOI: "Prescription drug abuse and addiction is a growing problem in ... [Read More](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Two persons were arrested on April 19 when teams from NCB busted the Bengaluru call centre that sold drugs to clients in the US.
- US embassy hails recent Bengaluru arrest
- The racketeers create websites that look authentic so that customers believe that products are procured locally.

BENGALURU: Last week's raid on a Bengaluru call centre that led to a massive seizure of medicines that were to be sold online have pointed to the US as a major market for illegal online drug sales.

Several such successful operations were conducted in other cities too.

Concerned about the growing menace, US agencies are working closely with their Indian counterparts to combat it. A US embassy spokesperson from Delhi told TOI: "Prescription drug abuse and addiction is a growing problem in the US and around the world. We work closely with Indian law enforcement agencies to fight this threat, and applaud the recent arrests in Bengaluru."

Two persons were arrested on April 19 when teams from Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) busted the Bengaluru call centre that sold drugs and prescription medicines on the internet to clients in the US, Australia and several other countries. About 5,355 psychotropic substances and other prescription drugs, including amphetamine, were seized.

A day after the raid, NCB zonal director Sunil Kumar Sinha told TOI: "We've recovered a huge database and are in the process of analysing it to see if there are domestic clients too. But most of them appear to be from outside India, particularly the US."

Stating it was NCB's first such seizure in Bengaluru, Sinha said multiple cases have come to light in Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Mumbai. "Every person or gang indulging in such activities are under our scanner," Sinha said.

Another officer said the agency had seized 10 lakh tablets after it busted a similar racket in Ahmedabad last August and arrested four people. Two operations were successful in Chennai and Hyderabad too.

"Most of their clients were in the US," the officer said. A senior official from the department of revenue intelligence (DRI) — which has also conducted several successful raids, including a massive seizure of 16 lakh tablets in Mumbai in November 2016 — said the modus operandi of such racketeers is to create websites that look authentic and make customers believe that even if calls are being taken/made from outside their respective countries, products are procured locally.

However, investigations have revealed that most of the drugs are procured in India. When asked if any rackets operating in India have been referred to local enforcement agencies by the US, the spokesperson said: "Our cooperation includes sharing information but we can't comment on ongoing investigations."

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## Food and drug association concerned too

In an email interview, Lyndsay Meyer, US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) spokesperson, said: "The global anonymity of the internet can provide a safe haven for illicit prescription drug sales. It continues to be a major source for counterfeit and unapproved prescription drugs. Many websites

seem like legitimate pharmacies, leading unsuspecting customers in the US to believe the dispensing pharmacy is in the US or Canada...The majority of counterfeits that we have seen have been manufactured outside the US, particularly in China and India."

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/most-illegal-online-drugs-sold-to-us-buyers/articleshow/58370499.cms>