

Himachal Pradesh plans to legalize hemp cultivation

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In news : The Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister is projecting an economic boom in legalising hemp cultivation

Key updates

- During his Budget speech the CM said “Commercial hemp cultivation is permitted and regulated in many countries and in some states in India.”
- He also said that the state government **proposes to frame a policy to permit commercial hemp cultivation** with proper regulatory framework

What is Hemp?

- Hemp, or industrial hemp, is a variety of the Cannabis sativa plant species that is grown specifically for industrial use. Along with bamboo, hemp is one of the fastest growing plants on Earth
- Scientific name: Cannabis sativa ssp. sativa

Need for commercialization hemp cultivation

- As per the experts, there is a huge demand for opium, an extract of the poppy grown widely in high mountains of the state, mainly the Kullu Valley, in the pharmaceutical industry.
- They say the selective cultivation of cannabis and poppy on the lines of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh could annually generate revenue of Rs 800 crore to Rs 900 crore.
- This creates investment and employment opportunities.

Cultivation of poppy and cannabis in Himachal pradesh

- As per the police officials, over 60 per cent of the poppy and cannabis produced in Himachal is smuggled to countries such as Israel, Italy, Holland and other European countries. The rest finds its way to Nepal or other Indian states like Goa, Punjab, and Delhi.
- A village in the state called 'Malana' in the Kullu Valley, has long been notorious for cultivating the prized 'Malana Cream' hashish, a purified resinous extract of cannabis.

Other states who legalized Hemp cultivation:

- The Uttarakhand state government has become the first one in India to issue a license for hemp cultivation. One can legally grow hemp provided the THC content is less than 0.3%.
- Uttar Pradesh is the other state that has legalized hemp cultivation