

What is black cocaine?

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In news– The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has recently arrested a Bolivian woman from Mumbai airport for allegedly carrying black cocaine.

About black cocaine-

- Black cocaine is a **mixture of regular cocaine base with various substances to camouflage typical appearance** (e.g. charcoal), to interfere with colour-based drug tests (cobalt salts form deep red complexes in solution), to make the mixture undetectable by drug-sniffing dogs(at airport) as activated carbon may sufficiently absorb trace odours.
- Black cocaine is regular cocaine, which is typically white in colour, it is the additional substance that makes it black in colour
- It **neutralises the smell of cocaine so that it can pass through checkpoints easily.**
- It also reportedly makes it easier to smuggle as it can be disguised as asphalt, printer toner, charcoal, fertiliser or metal moulds.
- The **pure cocaine base is then recovered from the mixture by extraction using common organic solvents such as methylene chloride or acetone.**
- A second process is required to convert the cocaine base into powdered cocaine hydrochloride.
- While black cocaine is not new, it is quite rare at least in India.
- According to reports, it was created in the mid-1980s after Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet ordered his army to create a clandestine cocaine which could be smuggled past law enforcement in the United States and Europe.

- **South American countries where coca plants grow are major suppliers of cocaine to India.**
- Generally, Mumbai is one of the landing points from where it is then sent to other parts of the country, especially to metro cities and Goa.
- **Amongst narcotics, Cocaine is one of the most expensive ones and is primarily used by the upper classes of society.**