

India Clears Move To Make Doping A Criminal Offence

India, which ranks third on the global list of dope-offenders compiled by the World Anti-Doping Agency, for the last three years, has cleared a proposal to make doping by athletes a criminal offence.

The proposal is in sync with laws that govern the usage of narcotics, according to the senior officials of the [National Anti Doping Agency](#) (NADA) and the Indian sports ministry. The proposed legislation is aimed at imposing punishments on coaches and manufacturers too, who in many cases have been known to supply athletes with [performance enhancing substances](#).

The draft legislation is being framed to criminalize the offence and will be forwarded to the sports ministry before being vetted by the law ministry. The Indian Parliament would have to pass the proposed legislation for it to be an Act. NADA director general Naveen Agarwal said the entire process could take at least six months. Agarwal, a 1986-batch J&K-cadre IPS officer, remarked the use, storage, and trade in narcotics is considered to be a criminal offence. Agarwal added we wanted doping to be put in the same category and the reason being if narcotics alter your mental condition, [doping substances](#) have an effect on your physical condition and also commented that both are very harmful for the body.

Agarwal also remarked he had met WADA director-general Olivier Niggli in Lausanne and also said it is on the world body's insistence that legislation is being prepared. The Indian National Anti Doping Agency has also sought assistance from the Australian Anti Doping Agency in forming the legislation. The NADA director general also said the rules are yet to be framed and added we have to work out the modus operandi of the Act. Agarwal also said there could be a prison term also and also remarked there have been several cases where coaches have induced athletes to take the banned substance but have gone unpunished.

Agarwal went on to comment that we cannot take any action against the coach because he has not committed a criminal offence as per the law but added this will change once this Act is passed. He also commented that many manufacturers and suppliers of nutritional supplements similarly add artificial elements to their products but do not display them on the labels. Agarwal added many people who go to gyms (and not just athletes) to get well-toned bodies fall prey to this and also said there are temporary short-term results at the cost of long-term health hazards. The NADA director general said this is a public health issue, so a proper legislation and criminalization is required.

The country currently ranks third on the global list of dope-offenders compiled by WADA for the last three years. The Indian sports ministry hopes that criminalizing the offence would act as an effective deterrent.

Sports Secretary Injeti Srinivas remarked it will need the engagement of several agencies. Once doping is made a criminal offence, it will act as a deterrent. Srinivas also commented that as much as complying with the idea of clean sports, this is also about realizing that doping results in acute harm to the abuser and so it should be prevented.