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Punjab Government Unveils Counter Narcotics Force to Combat Drug Menace

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The Punjab government launched the Punjab Counter Narcotics Force (PCNF) on July 22, 2025, as part of a comprehensive campaign to combat drug trafficking and substance abuse across the province. The initiative, led by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, is being hailed as a major step toward a drug-free Punjab, with a strong focus on protecting youth and strengthening legal enforcement under the newly enacted Punjab Control of Narcotics Substances Act, 2025.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in Lahore, Chief Minister Sharif emphasized the urgency of addressing the rising threat of narcotics, noting that nearly 65 percent of Pakistan's population comprises youth who must be safeguarded from the destructive effects of addiction. "There is no place for drug dealers in Punjab," she stated, outlining a zero-tolerance policy.

The PCNF is structured as a specialized law enforcement body with powers similar to the police, including the authority to conduct warrantless raids, arrests, and asset seizures. The force is led by a Director General with a military background and supported by a team of 866 personnel, who completed 12 weeks of specialized training at the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Academy in Rawalpindi. Their operations will be supported by centralized data systems and forensic services provided by the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA).

The formation of the PCNF comes in response to increasing concerns over drug availability in schools, colleges, and public spaces. Chief Minister Sharif noted the devastating social impact of addiction, particularly on families, and stressed the need for institutional capacity to address the crisis. As part of its operational rollout, the PCNF will establish Narcotics Control Stations in each district and tehsil. These stations will be supported by dedicated operational funds, standardized uniforms, and access to modern surveillance tools.

The Punjab Control of Narcotics Substances Act, 2025, also permits the confiscation and auction of assets seized during anti-narcotics operations to fund enforcement activities. The legislation aligns with international drug control conventions, reflecting Pakistan's commitment to global best practices in counter-narcotics enforcement.

This initiative, which complements efforts by other specialized provincial units such as the Crime Control Department (CCD), reflects the government's broader focus on public safety, social stability, and institutional reform. By adopting a multi-pronged approach combining enforcement, intelligence, and prevention, the Punjab government seeks to dismantle drug networks, safeguard communities, and provide a model for replication at the national level.