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Punjab Unveils Counter Narcotics Force to Combat Drug Menace

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In a significant move to address the growing drug crisis, Punjab has launched Pakistan's first provincial Counter Narcotics Force (CNF), a specialized unit dedicated to eradicating drug trafficking and abuse. This historic initiative, inaugurated on July 22, 2025, in Lahore, marks a strong commitment to protecting the province's youth and restoring public safety.

The CNF was established under the Punjab Control of Narcotics Substances Act 2025, making Punjab the first province in Pakistan to

form such a dedicated force. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, speaking at the launch ceremony, declared a zero-tolerance policy against drug dealers, stating, “There is no place for drug peddlers in Punjab. We will make the province drug-free.” The force is led by Director General Brigadier Mazhar Iqbal and consists of 866 rigorously trained officers and personnel, selected on merit from over 12,000 applicants. These personnel underwent training at the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Academy in Rawalpindi and are equipped with modern weapons and vehicles to carry out swift operations across all divisions, with plans to expand coverage to every district.

Punjab has been severely affected by drug abuse, with the epidemic infiltrating schools, universities, and streets, threatening the future of the province’s 65% youth population. The CNF has been granted police-like authority, allowing it to investigate, arrest, and conduct raids without warrants, as well as seize assets linked to narcotics activities. Forensic evidence provided by the Punjab Forensic Science Agency (PFSA) will be admissible in courts to strengthen prosecutions. Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman described the force as “a beacon of hope for a safer Punjab,” emphasizing its vital role in protecting future generations.

The formation of the CNF aligns with the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010), which empowered provinces to establish specialized enforcement units. This move complements Punjab’s broader law and order strategy, which includes the establishment of specialized Wildlife, Environment, Forest, and Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) forces.

As the CNF begins its operations, it carries the promise of a drug-free Punjab, offering hope to parents and communities eager for change.

The fight against narcotics is not only a policy priority but also a moral imperative to secure the province's future.