

### Global

#### [Different approaches to drug policy and the Asian HIV epidemic](#)

BioMed Central (02/02)

Following the recent launch of the series '[Harm reduction in Asia and the Pacific](#)', Dr Alex Wodak, President of the Australian Drug Law Reform Foundation, here writes a very honest account of efforts to control HIV among and from people who inject drugs in Asia.

#### [This is your UN on drugs](#)

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/854648/the-big-issue-this-is-your-un-on-drugs>

Bangkok Post (02/07)

"The acronym-addicted United Nations General Assembly will hold a special session on drugs beginning on April 19. Naturally, is it called Ungass, and lead-up shenanigans have already begun. A lot of countries will just sit it out, while many others, probably including Thailand, will be allowed a short statement and then marginalised onto the sidelines. Then, a tiny minority of countries and the vast majority of the 279 attending NGOs will push for legalisation," writes sub-editor Alan Dawson.

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### Australia

#### [Victorian children with epilepsy to take part in medical marijuana trial](#)

The Age (02/03)

The Austin Hospital in Melbourne is recruiting children suffering from intractable epilepsy to take part in trials using the non-psychoactive element of the cannabis plant, cannabidiol (CBD). The trial, reserved for children who have tried at least three conventional treatments that have otherwise failed, will use the most reliable study design possible to establish whether the drugs work. The American Company supplying the Drug, Insys Therapeutics, says CBD appears to have anti-convulsive action in animal models.

#### [The moneyball approach to clobbering drug abuse](#)

Huffington Post (02/05)

Prioritising public spending according to a sound evidence base sounds so simple. But again and again in Australia we see that tax dollars aren't being spent efficiently, and illicit drug policy is the perfect example.

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## **Cambodia**

### **[Amendments to drug law coming, if slowly](#)**

Khmer Times (02/01)

The Deputy Prime Minister Ke Kim Yan and Interior Minister Sar Kheng, have announced that planned amendments to drug laws will be decided upon only after the National Authority for Combating Drugs conducts a study. The Deputy Prime Minister, who is also president of the National Authority for Combating drugs, believes that current drug laws are too lenient on convicted offenders, with some serving reduced sentences. His stance reflects that of the current Prime Minister, Hun Sen, who issued regulation on Monday strengthening the countries crackdown on drugs.

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## **India**

### **[Project to treat people who use drugs and living with HIV in the Northeast set to be launched](#)**

Times of India (02/05)

To tackle the rising HIV prevalence in north-eastern states, especially among people injecting drugs, the government is set to launch a new initiative called 'Project Sunrise'. The project is aimed to diagnose 90% of such drug addicts with HIV and put them under treatment by 2020.

### **[Scholars, politicians kick off debate on legalising the sale of traditional drugs in Punjab](#)**

The Tribune (02/06)

With less than a year before state elections, several civil society activists, scholars and politicians — for the first time — have joined hands and launched a campaign demanding that controlled sale of traditional drugs — opium, poppy husk and cannabis — should be legalised in the state of Punjab.

### **[Punjab falters on helping drug dependents](#)**

The Times of India (02/07)

Punjab has lost the battle against drug de-addiction even before it has begun, a study by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi has indicated. It will take more than 10 years for the state government to provide even a single episode of treatment to addicts if it continues with the current strategies, the survey by the institute's National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre says, painting a grim picture of the days ahead.

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## Indonesia

### [Three Taiwanese sentenced to death in Indonesia for drug trafficking](#)

Focus Taiwan (02/01)

The Supreme Court's latest ruling follows the Attorney General's demand in November 2015 that capital penalties be applied to fifty drug traffickers, including the three Taiwanese in question. According to evidence brought forward by the Indonesian authorities, Luo Chih Chen, Chen Jia Wei and Wang An Kang each attempted to traffic more than two kilograms of amphetamines through Jakarta international airport in 2014. Warned by Indonesian officials not to 'try their luck' in the face of the country's drug crackdown, the Chinese ministry of Justice vowed to 'respect' the Indonesian judiciary's ruling.

### [In Indonesia, calls for new strategy in war on drugs](#)

Jakarta Globe (02/03)

The Indonesian government has declared its own war against drugs, but advocacy groups and rehabilitation service providers question the effectiveness of the policy, stressing the need for a health-based perspective instead of a punitive regime.

"The challenge for people who work in this area, or for anyone else who is concerned, is to campaign for drug dependency to be seen as a public health issue. Somebody has to start a serious campaign to reframe the issue," says Risa Alexander, a member of the board of the [Karisma Recovery Society](#), a nongovernmental group.

### [BNN urged to be more innovative in catching drug smugglers](#)

The Jakarta Post (02/05)

Indonesian lawmaker, Akbar Faisal, calls for 'more innovative' methods to be used in the fight against drug trafficking. The chief of the national drug agency, BNN, Comr. Gen. Budi Waseso vowed to be more creative in discovering and dismantling drug distribution networks, and has named plans to build a prison on an island guarded by crocodiles to prevent death row drug convicts from getting out as an example of innovation.

### [126 Indonesian workers face death in Malaysia](#)

The Jakarta Post (02/05)

Ministries are pooling their efforts to save 126 Indonesian migrant workers facing the death penalty in Malaysia for drug-related offences, an official said on Thursday. The government has used consultations, legal aid and a diplomatic approach to try to save the workers, director for the protection of Indonesians and legal aid at the Foreign Affairs Ministry Lalu Muhammad Iqbal said. All the defendants are currently undergoing legal proceedings in Malaysian courts.

### **[BNN calls for execution of drug kingpin, and clemency for those with lighter sentences to alleviate prison overcrowding](#)**

The Jakarta Post (02/05)

BNN chief Budi Waseso believes that the narcotics lord and death row convict Freddy Budiman is running his business from behind bars, and should be executed soon. Budi also said that he will consider supporting clemency pleas for those with light sentences in a move to reduce the country's overcrowded penitentiaries. "More than 62 percent of drug-related inmates are addicts," he said.

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## **New Zealand**

### **[Drug laws violate Bill of Rights](#)**

Press release, [Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party](#) (02/01)

The Misuse of Drugs Act breaches fundamental human rights, The Cannabis Party says. Now New Zealand's Attorney-General Hon Christopher Finlayson has admitted that New Zealand's drug laws were never assessed against the Bill of Rights Act.

### **[Pressure for Drug Bins at Festivals](#)**

Pollstar (02/04)

While the Australian live music sector campaigns to stop sniffer dogs at festivals – which many say do more harm than good – the health sector in Australia and New Zealand are calling for the adoption of international practices to combat a high rate of overdoses and two deaths during Australia's 2015-16 summer festival season.

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## **Philippines**

### **[Drug-related arrests involving gov't officials, employees, increasing](#)**

CNN Philippines (02/04)

Data recently released by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) shows an alarming number of government officials and employees arrested in anti-drug operations in 2015, with a six fold increase from 2011. The surprising statistics follow last month's arrest of former PDEA director, Col. Ferdinand Marcelino, who was busted in a drug raid involving some 60 kilos of methamphetamine.

### **[Presidential candidate calls for revival of the death penalty for drugs](#)**

Gulf News Philippines, (02/05)

Rodrigo Duterte, mayor of Davao City in southern Philippines, is one of the six official presidential candidates in May this year. He has vowed to reject money from 'drug lords',

and is calling for revival of the death penalty for “drug lords and hardened criminals.”  
Congress repealed the death penalty in 2006.

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## Taiwan

### [Need bigger data for more anti-drug efforts: premier](#)

China Post (02/03)

Taiwanese Premier Simon Chang ordered the cabinet on Tuesday to find a way of utilising data on drug trading, quantity of drugs seized and the frequency of raids, in an effort to find more innovative ways to tackle drug-related crime in the country. His proposal follows a report from the Taiwan High Prosecutor’s Office that drug seizures had increased from the period of January to November as compared to the same period last year.

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