

India seizes 5.5 tonnes of Myanmar meth in 'biggest' drug bust

AFP- India's coast guard said Tuesday they had seized their biggest haul of illicit drugs when they stopped a fishing boat smuggling 5.5 tonnes of methamphetamine from war-torn Myanmar. An Indian Coast Guard (ICG) reconnaissance air patrol spotted a small fishing boat in the Andaman Sea – which lies between India and troubled Myanmar – “operating in a suspicious manner”.

A coastguard vessel was sent out, with officers boarding at dawn Sunday when the fishing boat with a crew of six Myanmar citizens entered Indian territorial waters, the coastguard statement added.

“The boarding party found approximately 5,500 kilogrammes of prohibited drug methamphetamine,” it read.

“The seizure is the biggest-ever drug haul by ICG, highlighting its commitment to safeguarding Indian territorial waters.”

The boat has since been taken to an Indian naval base.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in 2021 and launched a crackdown that sparked an armed uprising.

Myanmar's Shan state is a leading source of synthetic drugs, much of it produced in illegal laboratories hidden in rugged jungle regions controlled by armed groups near Thailand's border.

Drug producers have increasingly turned to smuggling by boats to avoid tighter patrols on land routes through China and

Thailand.

A record 190 tonnes of methamphetamine were seized in East and Southeast Asia in 2023, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The seizure made by India could have been sold for millions of dollars on the street.

However, UN experts say mass manufacturing means the wholesale price of methamphetamine is as low as \$400 per kilogramme in production areas.

AFP