

## STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE

# Australian hanged

Straits Times/ANN

SINGAPORE, Dec. 2. — Nguyen Tuong Van first made it into the news on 16 December, 2002. A four-paragraph item in The *Straits Times* headlined "Aussie caught with drugs", reported that the Australian national had been charged for drug trafficking after being caught four days earlier while in transit at Changi Airport. In court, he did not enter a plea.

That was the obscure start to this story. Three years on, the ending was anything but. In the pre-dawn dark yesterday, some 50 newshounds from 35 TV channels and newspapers worldwide milled around outside Changi Prison, ready to report Nguyen's death to the world.

At 6 a.m. there was a sudden stillness in the air. That was the hour when the 25-year-old was hanged. His crime: trafficking in 396.2 g of pure heroin, an amount enough for 26,000 users.

His twin brother, Khoa Dang, showed up outside the prison 45 minutes earlier, with lawyer Mr Julian McMahon and eight friends in four taxis. After the media mobbed him, the entourage was let inside to wait in the visitors' room.

His mother, Madam Nguyen Kim, spent the morning at a chapel. Mother and son bade their final farewell the day before, when rules were relaxed, allowing her to hold his hands through a grille. She also

touch<sup>Drury</sup>ed his face and hair, according to Mr McMahon. *SP-1*

Such was the controversy over the case that the question of whether they could touch each other became a matter of national attention, meriting the intervention of the Australian and Singapore leaders.

Singapore which, like other countries that have capital punishment, does not allow such contact because of the trauma it could induce made a concession for holding hands. It did this after taking into account a personal appeal by Australian PM Mr John Howard to PM Mr Lee Hsien Loong.

It was apparently not good enough. Mr Howard yesterday described the decision to allow just hand-holding as "clinical". In Canberra, church bells tolled at 9 a.m. Politicians and supporters of the hanged man lit candles and placed flowers outside the Singapore High Commission. One banner read: "Oh Singapore, how could you?"

In Melbourne, Nguyen's hometown, there was a vigil at St Ignatius Church. Back in Singapore, just after 10 a.m., a hearse left the prison gates with Nguyen's body. Covered in a white shroud, the body was later placed in a coffin for a service at the Good Shepherd Convent's Marymount Chapel. His body will be flown home this evening. Mr Howard made five personal appeals to Mr Lee for clemency but Singapore stood firm.

### Who hanged Nguyen?

Singapore's veteran chief executioner, Darshan Singh (74), an Indian-origin man, whose identity had been blown by the Australian media, today said he was not called in to carry out the hanging of Australian drug runner Nguyen Tuong Van. He said that "only God knows" who hanged him. The Singapore government declined to say who hanged the 25-year-old Australian adds AFP.



A woman places a flower near a photo of Nguyen Tuong Van in Sydney on Friday. — AFP

03 DEC 2005 THE STATESMAN

# Provogue director held for drug links

## Family Accuses Police Of Planting Evidence In Lokhandwala Home

By S Ahmed Ali/TNN

**Mumbai:** Salil Chaturvedi, a director and promoter of the firm which owns the Provogue brand, was arrested on Tuesday for alleged links with a drug peddling ring.

The case, which has focused attention on the use of cocaine in Mumbai's high society, is being investigated by the Santa Cruz airport police which carried out the arrest.

As news of Chaturvedi's arrest spread, Provogue India Ltd's share price dropped from Rs 206 to Rs 180 in early afternoon trade before bouncing back to close at Rs 204.60. Chaturvedi's arrest is the latest in a series of detentions and searches carried out to trace the flow of high-grade cocaine from the labs of South America to Mumbai's pubs, including Provogue Lounge, which was managed by Chaturvedi and his associates.

The police claim they picked up the 34-year-old Chaturvedi from his plush residence at Charkop in Kandivli.

Chaturvedi's sister-in-law Sheetal contested the circumstances of his arrest and accused the police of framing him. "He was arrested at the police station when he went for routine questioning. And today morning, one police officer, on the pretext of carrying out a search, went to the toilet in our house in Lokhandwala and came out with some white powder. Police are trying to frame Salil. It is very illogical why would we keep such a thing when a member of our family is under scrutiny," she said.

Chaturvedi has been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act for arranging, possessing and transporting cocaine and under Sections 218 and 409 of the IPC for forging documents.

In a letter to police commissioner A N Roy, Salil's brother Nikhil, who's managing director of Provogue, said, "Search of the bathroom was conducted by the officers in the presence of ladies of the house. After completion of the search, the officers exited the bathroom without any recovery or discovery. Consequently no recovery of any incriminating article was effected...It is clear that the police team present at the residential premises have planted three vials which were not recovered in search. This is nothing short of fabrication of evidence and is punishable under Section 59 of the NDPS Act 1985."

The case has raised questions on how a drug cartel has skirted Indian customs to sustain a steady traffic, operating under the nose of Indi-



Salil Chaturvedi being taken away by police

an enforcement agents. Three Tanzanians held in the same case have confessed before the Mumbai police that they had regularly supplied cocaine to a familiar clientele for the past two to three years. The drug was being sold at late-night parties in the city.

Chaturvedi is the ninth accused to be arrested in this case. The police made a breakthrough in the case on January 26 when they arrested Provogue staffer Allywn Sequeira and his brother, Joe Sequeira. Subsequently, the former CEO of Provogue, Vishal Maghnani, and assistant police inspectors Sanjay Shinde and Shantilal Jadhav were arrested, besides the three Tanzanian nationals.

Police sources say Chaturvedi had planned to open a pub in Chennai in February and had organised a launch for which he had asked Maghnani to make arrangements. Maghnani had allegedly asked Allywn to supply him high quality cocaine for the event.

Investigators say they traced the link from Allywn back to the three Tanzanians from whom they seized about 900 grams of cocaine worth Rs 35 crore. Allywn was caught with five grams of cocaine on January 26 while trying to courier it to Maghnani at a Chennai address.

Following the arrest, Maghnani and Chaturvedi allegedly contacted assistant police inspector, Shantilal Jadhav who was attached to the then joint commissioner of police (administration) P K Jain. Jadhav in turn contacted his batchmate Sanjay Shinde at the airport police station.

There, Jadhav and Shinde in connivance of investigating officer Ashok Kadam demanded Rs 8 lakh to weaken the case and after accepting the first instalment of Rs 2.65 lakh, they allegedly changed the contents of the envelope with boric powder and again sealed it.

However, senior inspector Madhukar Gatade suspected foul play and sent the envelope for a micro test to a forensic laboratory in Hyderabad which confirmed that there were traces of cocaine. Earlier, in the course of interrogation, Maghnani had named a long list of Bollywood personalities and a few pubs in the suburbs to which they supplied banned drugs.

When asked whether the police were likely to call the Bollywood personalities and the pub owners, additional commissioner of police (north region) Parambir Singh said, "As of now, we are not calling anybody but if we get concrete evidence against anybody we will not hesitate even to arrest them."

0 A AUG 2006

# 360-ft drug tunnel found under US-Canada border

## Three British Columbian Traffickers Held

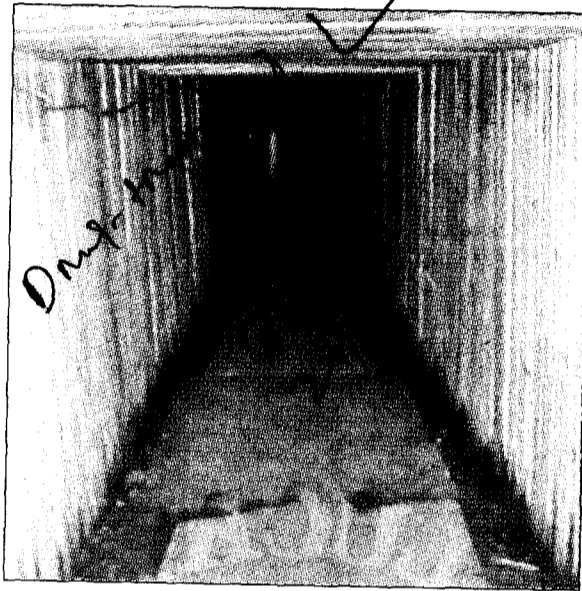
**Lynden/Seattle (Washington):** US federal agents have shut down an elaborate, 360-foot (120-metre) drug-smuggling tunnel dug underneath the US-Canadian border—the first such passageway discovered between the two countries, officials said on Thursday. Numerous smuggling tunnels have been found on the US-Mexican border.

Three people were arrested on marijuana trafficking charges, US attorney John McKay said in the border town of Lynden. The tunnel runs from a Quonset hut on the Canadian side and ends under the living room of a home on the US side.

Built with lumber, concrete and metal reinforcing bars, the passageway was equipped with lights and ventilation, and ran underneath a highway.

"They were smart enough to build a sophisticated tunnel. They weren't smart enough to not get caught," McKay said. "The presence of a tunnel on our northern border threatens the security of both countries, whether it is used to smuggle drugs, contraband or even terrorists. Shutting it down, just as it is completed, is a huge blow to these criminals."

The smugglers spent more than a year building the tunnel. McKay said authorities had been monitoring the construction for



**The smugglers' tunnel had lighting and ventilation and was reinforced with concrete, metal and wooden bars**

six months and sealed it shortly after it opened on Wednesday.

Francis Devandra Raj, 30; Timothy Woo, 34; and Johnathan Valenzuela, 27, of Surrey, British Columbia, were arrested on Wednesday. They were charged with conspiracy to import and distribute marijuana. Raj owns the property under the Quonset hut, authorities said.

Last week, two other people were arrested separately for transporting marijuana that had come through the tunnel, agents said. One was a woman who smuggled 42 kg of marijuana and the other

was a man pulled over with 50 kg of the drug.

Investigators said that while they believe the tunnel had only been used briefly to smuggle marijuana into the United States, the tunnel was also likely intended to smuggle illegal immigrants into the United States and cocaine and guns into Canada.

"This tunnel was ambitious, sophisticated and an example of the lengths individuals and criminal organisations will go to for illegal profits," said inspector Pat Fogarty of the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit in British Columbia. Agencies

# Aussie beauty therapist gets 20 years for Bali drug offence

**Bali (Indonesia):** An Indonesian court on Friday sentenced Australian beauty therapist Schapelle Corby to 20 years in jail for trying to smuggle 4.1 kg of marijuana into Bali, triggering outrage from her family and friends.

"The panel of judges declares the defendant legally and convincingly guilty of the crime of illegal importation of narcotics," judge Linton Sirait told a hearing watched live across Australia, where the case has transfixed the nation.

As soon as Sirait read the verdict, Corby's mother, Rosleigh Rose, shouted at the three judges on the panel: "Liar, liar. Honey, we are going to take you home."

Corby turned to her mother and pleaded with her to calm down. "Mum, stop, it's okay," she cried, holding her hand up in the air in a motion for her mother to stop yelling.

Standing to hear the verdict and wear-

ing pink trousers and a black blouse, Corby occasionally slapped her forehead with her palm in grief. She struggled to contain her emotions and at times became angry.

Prosecutors had demanded life in jail for Corby, 27, who has repeatedly argued the drugs found by airport officials in her unlocked bag on the famous holiday island last year were not hers and that they were planted. Corby's family said they would appeal.

Earlier, officials whisked Corby into the court through a side entrance, avoiding scores of journalists. The court had leeway

to disregard the prosecutors' demand and sentence Corby to death if she was found guilty.

Corby's trial has gripped Australia. Her plight has also triggered a series of threats against Indonesian diplomatic missions in the country. Agencies



Schapelle Corby (right) is hugged by her mother after the court order

## NE ultras take to narcotics trafficking

Debasis Sarkar

SILIGURI 26 MAY

MILITANT outfits active in Nepal and the northeastern sector have suddenly become active. They have recently joined hands with smugglers operating along the 'Siliguri narcotic corridor' and the Indo-Nepal border to make some easy money on the side.

"Trans-border narcotic trafficking has become a choice avenue for militant outfits. In this, they have developed a close nexus with the smuggling syndicates along the Indo-Nepal border," said senior officials of Sima Suraksha Bal (SSB), which guards the border.

Estimates are that drug trafficking along the narcotic corridor has gone up to over Rs 150 crore per annum. The region has become a haven for narcotic traffickers and the recent rise in drug seizure cases in Siliguri and its adjoining areas only prove that such activities have been on the rise.

According to L.B. Kumai, deputy director of intelligence (CID), the narcotics corridor in North Bengal is strategically placed.

With Bhutan in the north and Bangladesh in the south, the 120-km corridor runs along NH34 through various North Bengal districts from the Indo-Nepal border in the west to the Assam Bengal border in the east. Along the route, it has access to supplies coming from Myanmar, Thailand and Bangladesh.

27 MAY 2005 *The Economic Times*

# Drug ring: Three held in Jaipur

By Prakash Bhandari  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

*Drug Trafficking*

**Jaipur:** The smashing of a multi-million dollar Internet drug ring by the US authorities after simultaneous raids in India, US and Costa Rica is suspected to have Jaipur connections. The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) arrested on Thursday three members of a family, including one female, for their involvement in drug trafficking.

The CBN officials, after raiding the premises of the pharmaceutical dealer Jaya Enterprise, arrested Yatintra Kumar Agarwal, Krishna Chandra Agarwal and Shivani alias Jaya alias Julie Agarwal who were presented before a court here on Wednesday. *Drug Trafficking*

They were remanded for 15 days. The CBN officials recovered five lakh capsules of narcotics drug from the premises of Jaya Enterprises. *11-1*

The narcotics officials recovered large quantity of psychotropic drugs during the raid on Agarwal. PWC-60, alprazolam, diazepam, alprazolam 1 mg, Alpax, and codina sulphate were recovered by the narcotics officials from Agarwal's business premises on Thursday night. *226/1*

It is learnt that the US Drug Enforcement Authority (USDEA), after closely monitoring the illicit operations, discovered that a parcel sent from Jaipur was detected in a US airport.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Internet drug ring had money control in Australia

*23/4* *PTI*  
**New Delhi:** Participating in a joint global raid, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the American Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) cracked down on an Agra-based doctor, Brij Bhushan Bansal, and his two associates who were allegedly running a global drug racket, supplying banned psychotropic drugs to internet pharmacies for consumption in the US.

The drug ring had its financial control in Australia where an accused had created intricate systems to receive payment via the web and distribute it to others involved in the racket. Twenty persons, including six from India, have been arrested so far in coordinated worldwide raids.

Officials of NCB and DEA believe Australian Shakleton was the man who held all the global strands of the

*Drug Trafficking*  
racket together. Shakleton managed the websites through which orders were taken for the supply of narcotics, steroids and other psychotropic drugs. He collected the payment through credit cards, arranged the supply of the drugs and then sent money to others, including Bansal who supplied the drugs from India.

After the racket was smashed, Shakleton had fled to Europe where enforcement agencies were on his trail, NCB sources said. Bansal, the main supplier, was arrested in Agra on Thursday. While his son Akhil was held in the US, his daughter Shivani Aggarwal was arrested in Jaipur. Shivani's husband Yatin and father-in-law Kishan Aggarwal were also arrested for their involvement in the racket. **PTI**



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Drug Free  
50-5  
23/4

# Drug websites under scanner

Rahul Tripathi  
in New Delhi

April 22. — A day after the Drug Enforcement Agency of USA and its Indian counterpart, Narcotics Control Bureau, busted an online drug cartel, 200 websites have come under the scanner of international agencies.

Sources said NCB has got a detailed list from DEA about the websites operating in USA and Canada which were offering banned and limited sale Schedule II-V pharmaceutical drugs through an Indian national, Brij Bhushan Bansal.

Here is the list of operators and websites which have been indicted by DEA. Kevin Atinkson was the operator of *performancemarketingltd.com*, Victor Devore sold anti-depressants and aphrodisiacs through five websites — *bigcitymeds.com*, *greentreerx.com*, *mercomeds.com*, *rxapproved.com* and *rxglobally.com*. Tom Peters and Kelly Ann Couchman's *mymeds.com*, Mathew Joseph Melao and Christopher Geoff Laine's *ourprescriptionstoreless.com* and *yourpharmacyone.one*. Rohn Wallace's *usarxpress.com* and *discountmedsonline.com* and William Randall Reed aka Millerlight and Richard Dabnley also ran *orderspanel.com*.

Many of these sites are still active and open even after the raids and arrests carried out across many cities and countries. A probe revealed that international drug cartels struck deals with the Bansals

through *orderspanel.com*.

Sleuths in NCB claimed that these websites prefixed rx (I give) on their domain name to show that they are legal entities and can supply anti-depressants which are otherwise sold only through prescription. "Though *greentreerx.com* claimed that medicines are sold through prescription but it has three easy steps to purchase pharmaceutical drugs in just '15 minutes'," said an NCB official. "Similarly, *performancemarketingltd.com* claimed that over one crore Internet users have logged on to their websites," he added.

Brij Bhushan Bansal was arrested in Agra last night and was brought to Delhi today. DEA is likely to ask for his extradition. Bansal is now being questioned by senior officials of NCB and other intelligence agencies. His son, Akhil Bansal, studying medicine in Philadelphia has also been arrested. Over 20 men have been detained in several parts of the country.

"Operation Cyber Chase" began after the DEA Philadelphia Division identified a Philadelphia-based international Internet drug trafficking organisation, allegedly headed by Indian nationals Bansal and his son.

The Bansal Organisation, as DEA calls the father-son duo, allegedly repackaged controlled substances smuggled into the USA from India and other countries and distributed them throughout the USA and the world.

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THE STATESMAN



# Indian doc's family in www drug racket

Drug Trafficking RT-1 224

**S. Rajagopalan & Hemendra Chaturvedi**  
*Washington/Agra, April 21*

AN INDIAN doctor and his family, spread across the world, spearheaded a multi-million-dollar Internet drug racket before US authorities smashed the ring in the biggest bust of its kind.

The racket involved sale of controlled drugs without prescription through 200-odd retail websites. Buyers were charged more than the market price. Supply and distribution were centred at a rogue pharmacy in Agra, run by Dr Brij Bhushan Bansal (51).

Bhansal and his Philadelphia-based son Akhil were the kingpins of the racket. Akhil (26) is also a licensed physician in India and registered with Temple University. The racket also involved Bansal's brother Anil, daughter Julie and son-in-law Yatindra in Jaipur, a daughter-in-law from Canada and over a dozen others including an Indian — Atul Patil (32), a friend of Akhil and a fellow-student at Temple University. The racketeers were arrested in simultaneous raids that saw the authorities seizing \$7 million from 41 bank accounts in India, the US



## IN THE NET

- Brij Bhushan Bansal (Agra)
- Son Akhil (Philadelphia)
- Brother Anil (Agra)
- Daughter Julie (Jaipur)
- Julie's husband Yatindra Aggarwal
- Yatindra's father K. Aggarwal
- Brij's daughter-in-law (Canada)

and Costa Rica. They also had agents in the UK and Greece.

Since July 2003, the Bansal Organisation distributed approximately 2.5 million dosage

ring's websites was said to be a generic version of Viagra, the sexual stimulant. Pills for sleeping and mental disorders, available cheap in India, are in great demand abroad.

"There was no physician, no pharmacist and no quality control of these drugs that were sold at above-market rates," said Patrick Meehan, US attorney for Eastern Pennsylvania.

Till a few years ago, Bansal's clinic looked like a shabby dispensary. Now, it is a well-furnished office at Motilal Nehru Road. It has been locked for some time, with Bansal giving it

a facelift with marble floors. Bansal owns a lavish house in the posh Kamla Nagar locality.

His claim to fame is not his medical expertise. He tried his hand in the share market, a silver business and a partnership to set up a Nepal hospital. Now, he is under heart treatment in custody.

The US Drug Enforcement Authority monitored the operation for over a year and then mounted a 48-hour office. An indictment was filed by a federal grand jury in a Philadelphia court. "We've logged these traffickers off the Internet," said DEA administrator Karen P. Tandy.

# International drug ring headed by Indians busted

TV Parasuram  
in Washington

istrator Karen P Tandy said. Over the past two days, there were 20 arrests in eight US cities and four foreign countries. Domestically, arrests occurred in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Ft. Lauderdale and Sarasota, Florida; Abilene and Tyler, Texas; New York, NY; Greenville, SC; and Rochester, New York. Internationally, arrests were made in San Jose, Costa Rica; New Delhi, Agra, and Mumbai.

The arrests were the results of Operation 'Cyber Chase,' a year-long Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force

investigation that targeted international Internet pharmaceutical traffickers operating in the United States, India, Asia, Europe and the Caribbean. These e-traffickers distributed drugs worldwide using "rogue" Internet pharmacies.

Operation Cyber Chase began after the DEA Philadelphia Division identified a Philadelphia-based international Internet drug trafficking organization, allegedly headed by Indian nationals Brij Bhusan Bansal and Akhil Bansal. Five members of the Bansal family have been charged. The Bansal Organization

allegedly repackaged controlled substances smuggled into the US from India and other countries and distributed them throughout the US and the world. Since July 2003, the Bansal Organization allegedly distributed approximately 2.5 million dosage units of Schedule II-V pharmaceutical controlled substances including Vicodin (hydrocodone), anabolic steroids, and amphetamines per month. "For too long the Internet has been an open medicine cabinet with cyber drug dealers illegally doling out a vast array of narcotics, am-

phetamines, and steroids. In this first major international enforcement action against online rogue pharmacies and their sources of supply, we have logged these traffickers off the Internet," Mr Tandy said. Operation 'Cyber Chase' targeted major pharmaceutical drug traffickers who allegedly shipped Schedule II-V pharmaceutical controlled substances including narcotics, amphetamines, and anabolic steroids directly to buyers of all ages without the medical examination by a physician required by US law. These e-traffickers used

more than 200 websites to illicitly distribute pharmaceutical controlled substances.

In early April, the Grand Jury in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and in the Eastern District of New York issued indictments which seeks forfeiture of 41 bank accounts, 26 in the US and the remaining in Cyprus, India, Singapore, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, West Indies, Antigua, and Ireland. Illegal financial transactions listed in the indictment total more than \$6 million with restitution sought for that amount. —PTI