



DRUGNET IN PURSUIT OF CYBERSPACE DRUG DEALERS

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Read e-mail exchanges between Akhil and Brij.

Scroll through Akhil's PowerPoint presentation.

» <http://go.philly.com/drugnet>

FAMILY FEUDS from A22

The task fell to DEA's Terence Reilly, who began to brainstorm. He sent three dozen possible names to his boss, Mary Irene Cooper:

Firewall, Cyber Force, Cyborg, Cyber Sleuth, E-Force, Pill Matrix ... Cyber Pharm, Cyber Chase, Cyber Narc, Net Narc ... Mouse Click, Web Sentinel, Web Sentry, Web Reaper, Net Death ...

Cooper chose Cyber Chase. That evening at Reilly's home, a title in his video library caught his eye — a movie called *The Cyber Chase*. He flinched. The star was Scooby-Doo.

AGRA

Brij didn't cut off deadbeat clients, but he did harden his tone. In an e-mail to the Florida-based operator of myemeds.com, he wrote:

The government of India has imposed restrictions on many medicines and declared them Narcotic Substance. There are huge penalties and even imprisonment as a punishment if someone is found selling them without a prescription. Till now we were supplying you with the stock we maintain as a buffer but it is now coming to a near end ...

We have no choice but to pay bribes and premiums to get our medicines. This is possible (and in our benefit) only because of some helpful corrupt people in India.

ROXBOROUGH

Snug in his three-bedroom apartment, with its familiar curry, cardamom and garam masala aromas, Akhil startled his roommate with the news:

In three months, he planned to quit his father's business. What began as an easy chore now threatened to ruin his plan to run hospitals in India.

His family's pharmacy clients called at all hours from Australia and Europe. He was falling behind at Temple, and doubted his professors would understand. It might

even jeopardize his summer job at Mercy Hospital.

Each week brought new hassles. The list of deadbeat clients continued to grow, and his father refused to cut them off.

A favored offshore bank now demanded to know the source of Akhil's large deposits.

Governments, under pressure from global drug companies, were cracking down on Internet pharmacies. Recent Canadian raids had cost the Bansals \$200,000.

Then there was David Armstrong's betrayal.

Armstrong ran the Bansals' depot in Queens, N.Y., the place where shipments arrived from India. Armstrong supervised the immigrant women there who fulfilled customer orders.

Acting on a tip, Akhil had hacked into Armstrong's computer and discovered that he had been stealing pills and customer data. Armstrong was using the data to spam customers, directing them to his own Web site, ontimeviagra.com.

Akhil planned to fire Armstrong as soon as he could find a new shipper and depot. He had his eye on rental homes in Bucks County.

Though discouraged, Akhil took time to devise a business innovation he hoped would increase efficiency. He introduced it to clients in an e-mail:

We would like to invite you to our Web site www.orderspanel.com. In our pursuit for continuous improvement of our services ... you can now directly upload orders. ... You can also see and download tracking sheets online. ...

We also request you to zip your file with password protection (8 alphanumeric) ...

*With warm regards,
Dr. Akhil Bansal*

This new system would be more professional and less haphazard than the current, cumbersome system, which relied on e-mail. It would give Akhil more control over the network.

If a client didn't pay, he could block access to orderspanel.com. If an employee couldn't be trusted, or



MICHAEL BRYANT / Inquirer Staff Photographer

Prosecutor Barbara Cohan with the smoking gun, Akhil's PowerPoint. She knew it would make riveting evidence for a jury.

became a problem, he wouldn't get a password.

Akhil's father did not get a password.

CENTER CITY

DEA agent Eric Russ, a no-nonsense former Marine, was not an excitable guy. But he rarely found evidence *this* good.

He rushed it across Market Street to the prosecutors' offices. Barb put the evidence — a PowerPoint presentation Russ had discovered in Akhil's e-mail — into her computer.

The file was amazing. The PowerPoint presented a detailed history of the Bansal pill distribution network, as written by Akhil. Apparently, it was something he had put together for his Costa Rican connection, back in July.

As Barb and Kelly scrolled down, they could not contain their out-

rage. After all, here was a doctor dispensing generic prescription pills without even talking to patients.

Barb had always figured Akhil's enterprise was all about money, not health care. Now the PowerPoint confirmed it.

The prosecutors began reading Akhil's presentation aloud, their booming voices carrying into the hallway. They scoffed at the way Akhil presented his rise to success — sections labeled Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Revolution.

"The arrogance of this guy," Kelly thought. "He's proud of what he's done."

The evidence prosecutors already had — bank records, e-mails, invoices — was incriminating, but dull. Here was something dramatic, visual, and in Akhil's broken English. A

jury would eat it up.

The last slide posed a series of questions. "Can we process more orders? ... Till how long we can get this going? What if anything bad happens?"

The prosecutors howled. Barb mimicked Akhil. "What if anything bad happens?"

She began to chant: "What if anything bad happens? What if anything bad happens?"

Barb kicked off her black pumps, dancing now. "What if anything bad happens? You're about to find out."

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TOMORROW: BETRAYAL

Akhil gets attacked; the agents get psyched.

Pakistan's Senate amends rape law

By Munir Ahmed
ASSOCIATED PRESS

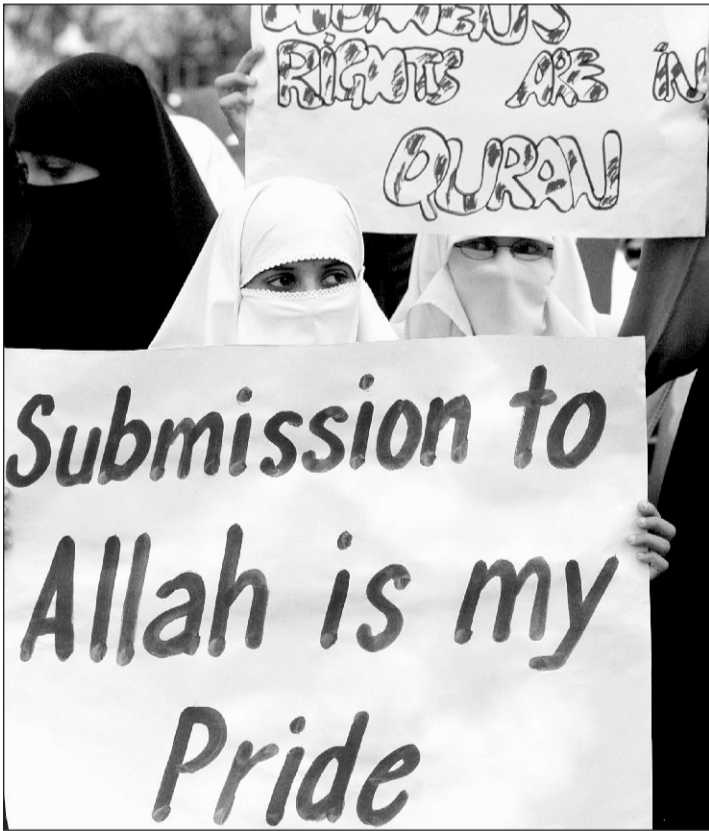
ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Pakistan's Senate overcame opposition from hard-line Muslim lawmakers and amended its rape law yesterday to make it easier to prosecute cases of sexual assault.

Human rights activists have long condemned the rape law for punishing — instead of protecting — rape victims while providing legal safeguards for their attackers. The legislation, known as the Protection of Women Bill, comes amid efforts by Islamabad to soften the country's hard-line Islamic image and appease moderates and human rights groups who opposed the law.

The amended law would drop the death penalty for people found to have had sex outside of marriage, though they still would be subject to a five-year prison term or \$165 fine.

Judges also will be able to choose whether to try a rape case in a criminal court or Islamic court, which should make it easier to convict rapists.

Under the current Hudood Ordinance, rape victims could only raise a case in the Islamic court. It requires testimony from four witnesses, making a trial of an alleged rapist almost impossible.



M.R. KHAN / Associated Press

Supporters of a religious party protest at a rally in Lahore to condemn amendments to Pakistan's controversial rape laws.

"The approval of the bill by the Senate is a great thing," Mehnaz Rafi, a female lawmaker who worked for 27 years to

change the law. "Today, the Senate gave protection and justice to women."

The proposal passed in a

voice vote in the government-controlled Senate a week after clearing the National Assembly, or lower house of parliament, Information Minister Mohammed Ali Durrani said.

The bill now goes before President Pervez Musharraf, who is expected to sign it into law as a major test of the leader's push to introduce "enlightened moderation" to this Islamic nation.

Musharraf — a moderate — has been a strong supporter of changing sections of the rape laws. International and local calls for change intensified after the 2002 gang rape of a woman, Mukhtar Mai, who was assaulted after a tribal council in her eastern Punjab village ordered the rape as punishment for her 13-year-old brother's alleged affair with a woman of a higher caste.

But hundreds of opposition supporters have rallied against amending the old laws, which were introduced by the late President Zia ul-Haq to make Pakistani legislation more Islamic.

On Wednesday, opposition leader Sen. Khurshid Ahmed, from the religious coalition, condemned the bill as "an attempt to promote an alien culture and secularism in Pakistan."



RAJESH NIRGUDE / Associated Press

Indian police douse flames on a Tibetan activist who set himself on fire outside the hotel where Chinese President Hu Jintao is staying.

Tibetan activist sets himself on fire in India

He was among a group that protested a visit by China's president. China took over Tibet in 1950.

By Ramola Talwar Badam
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MUMBAI, India — A Tibetan independence activist set himself on fire yesterday outside the hotel where Chinese President Hu Jintao was courting Indian business leaders eager to boost trade between Asia's emerging giants.

The protester, Lhakpa Tsering, suffered only minor burns before police put out the flames and detained him and six other Tibetan activists.

The incident was a sign of increasing frustration among Tibetans in India who feel their cause has been abandoned by Indian officials eager to foster closer ties with China, which forcibly absorbed Tibet in 1950.

Throughout Hu's four-day visit, Indian authorities went to great lengths to make sure he was not confronted with any anti-Chinese sentiment, erecting tight police cordons and banning gatherings of more than five people in areas where he was traveling.

Police even barred Tenzin Tsundue — a prominent Tibetan activist with a reputation for publicity stunts that have embarrassed previous Chinese visitors — from leaving Dharmasala, the center of the Tibetan exile community.

Yesterday's demonstration was the closest Tibetans got to Hu, who addressed 300 Indian and Chinese business leaders at the hotel before flying to Pakistan.

Tsering and six other Tibetan youths drove up in two taxis to Hu's hotel, the Taj Mahal Palace & Towers in downtown Mumbai. They jumped out in front of a barricade, unfurled Tibetan flags and shouted "Get out of Tibet!"

Tsering then doused his pants with a liquid and set them on fire. Several police officers quickly jumped on the man, rolled him on the ground, and doused the flames. They detained all seven Tibetan activists.

Asked about the protests, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said in Beijing: "Tibet is part of China. This is a widely recognized consensus of the international community."

India became a center for Tibetan exiles when their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, fled Tibet in 1959 after a failed uprising, settling in the northern town of Dharmasala.

Court close to opening Darfur war-crime trials

By Mike Corder
ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — The International Criminal Court is close to launching prosecutions against war-crimes suspects in Sudan's Darfur region, the chief prosecutor said yesterday.

Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo did not name any of those suspected of atrocities.

"Based on a careful and thorough source evaluation of all the evidence collected, we were able to identify the gravest incidents and some of those who could be considered to be the most criminally responsible," Moreno-Ocampo told a meeting of states that have ratified the Hague-

based court.

He said investigators had proof of crimes against humanity and war crimes including murder, rape, torture, deliberate attacks on civilians, persecution and forcible expulsions.

More than 200,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced since rebels from ethnic African tribes rose up against the Arab-led central government in the vast arid area of western Sudan that is roughly the size of Texas.

Khartoum is accused of using the Janjaweed militias of Arab nomads to retaliate, but the government denies backing or arming the Janjaweed. U.N. investigators have

blamed the Janjaweed for the worst atrocities, such as murders, rapes, arson and looting.

Moreno-Ocampo's announcement came a day after U.N. humanitarian chief Jan Egeland said there had been a "dramatic deterioration" in Darfur, where four million Sudanese are in desperate need of help as newly armed Arab militias and rebels escalate attacks and resume looting and burning villages.

Investigators carried out 70 missions in 17 countries tracing victims, taking statements from more than 100 victims and witnesses and collecting documents, Moreno-Ocampo said.

However, they have been unable to carry out investigations

in Darfur itself because of the ongoing violence.

Moreno-Ocampo said Sudanese authorities had provided investigators with a government-ordered report that found that "from 2003 to 2004 grave human-rights breaches were committed by all parties to the conflict and that in Darfur, murder and crimes against humanity had been committed by all parties to the conflict."

The Sudanese report also "established that many allegations concerning incidents of murder have been attributed to ... Janjaweed, either acting alone or together with elements of the Sudanese security forces," Moreno-Ocampo said.