

The Hindu, 1 February 2005

**Access to porn sites banned in cyber cafes (UNI)**

LUCKNOW, JAN. 31. Uttar Pradesh Government has completely banned viewing of porn sites in cyber cafes in the State and warned of strict action against those flouting rules. Minister of State for IT and Electronics (Independent charge) Virendra Singh has already issued directives to all the District Magistrates and Police Superintendents to ensure strict compliance with the order. According to the order, the provision of cubicles and cabins in the cyber cafes would also be done away with and all such outlets would be duly registered with the administration. Mr Singh said so far the State Government had not been able to put an effective tab on criminal and obscene activities being carried out from cyber cafes, but the present order seeks to meet the end.

The Hindu, 2 February 2005

**Scooter dickey gang busted**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 1. Four members of an inter-State gang, allegedly responsible for 18 scooter dickey offences in and around the city, were arrested by the Saroornagar police at the Andhra Bank Kothapet branch office. An amount of Rs. 1.40 lakhs, two motorcycles and four cell phones were recovered from their possession, the Inspector, M. Chandrashekhar, said on Tuesday. Following the spurt in scooter dickey offences from August last, plainclothesmen were deployed at banks to keep a watch. On Monday, the constables noticed four men moving under suspicious circumstances and alerted Mr. Chandrashekhar and Detective Sub-Inspector, N. Saidulu, who rushed there and apprehended them.

The Hindu, 2 February 2005

**Hide worth Rs. 5 crores seized**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 1. A huge contraband of animal skins, including those of tigers and leopards, was seized by the Central Delhi police following the arrest of four persons this Monday. The consignment is valued at about Rs. 5 crores in the international market. Acting on a tip-off that the smugglers of wildlife products were active in the area, the Special Staff of the Central Delhi police developed the inputs, which led to the arrest of Sudesh Kumar from near Ramlila Ground in Kamla Market. A leopard skin was recovered from his possession. During interrogation, Sudesh disclosed that he worked for one of the most notorious poachers in the country, Sansar Chand.

The Hindu, 2 February 2005

**Child kidnapping case: Police team sent to Orissa**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 1. No breakthrough has been made in the case of kidnapping of the 18-month-old son of a senior executive with a multinational company allegedly by his maid from Srinivaspuri in South Delhi this past Monday. While the motive behind the abduction is not yet clear, a police team has been sent to Orissa to trace the suspect. The police said no ransom call had been made so far to the parents of Arpit, who was allegedly abducted by the maid, Shabitri. However, they are not ruling out kidnapping for ransom as one of the motives. They are also trying to find out whether it is the handiwork of any gang which is into abducting and selling male children.

The Hindu, 3 February 2005

**Hearing on Godhra case accused plea on February 7**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 2. The Supreme Court will hear on February 7 a special leave petition filed by an accused in the 'Godhra train carnage case' against a Gujarat High Court order staying the functioning of the Central POTA Review Committee set up to review cases registered under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA). A three-judge Bench comprising Justice N. Santosh Hegde, Justice B. P. Singh and Justice S. B. Sinha directed listing of the petition filed by Saiyed Amiruddin Alimuddin, lodged in the Sabaramati central jail, after the Solicitor General, G.E. Vahanvati, 'mentioned' for early hearing of the SLP as the High Court had stayed the functioning of the committee without hearing the Centre.

The Hindu, 3 February 2005

**Stamps scam accused gives police the slip**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 2. A businessman, Srinivasa Rao, who was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with stamps case, fled from the Nampally Criminal Courts Complex here on Tuesday. The CBI Inspector, Alam Singh, and the constable, Ramchander, had picked up Rao on Monday at Narsaraopet in Guntur. He was brought to the city for being produced before the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge.

The Hindu, 3 February 2005

**SIM card cloning case detected, 7 held**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 2. In probably the first case of Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) SIM card cloning detected in the country, the South-West Delhi police have arrested seven people on charges of duping a mobile service provider of over Rs. 9 lakhs by arranging international calls through the cloned cards from Saudi Arabia. A laptop, two SIM readers, software and several mobile phones have been recovered in the operation.

The Hindu, 3 February 2005

### **LJP, BJP behind abductions, alleges Lalu**

PATNA, FEB. 2. The Rashtriya Janata Dal chief and Railway Minister, Lalu Prasad, today accused the leaders of the Lok Janshakti Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party of engineering the kidnapping of schoolchildren to damage his image and make capital of it in the Assembly elections, the first phase of which will be held tomorrow. Two of the abducted children, Kislay Kaushik and Deepak Kumar, were rescued today. Mr. Prasad said that gangster Chunnu Thakur, who is alleged to have kidnapped Kislay, had applied for the LJP ticket for his wife and charged that the LJP had become a haven for criminals.

New Indian Express, 3 February 2005

### **Paritala killing: Six weapons seized from accused**

ANANTAPUR: Police seized six weapons from the five accused in the killing of TDP legislator Paritala Ravindra, who surrendered to the police here on Tuesday. The police seized two carbines, three revolvers and one pistol. Of the six, two weapons - a carbine and a pistol - belonged to the gunman who was killed in the shootout. The police are yet to produce the five accused - Narayana Reddy, Vadde Sreenu, Vadde Konda, Ranganayakulu and Obi Reddy - in the court. Sources said that they were being questioned.

The Hindu, 4 February 2005

### **Order reserved on plea to shift Pappu Yadav**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 3. The Supreme Court today reserved verdict on the petitions from the Central Bureau of Investigation and the brother of a deceased trade union leader, seeking direction to shift the RJD MP from Madhepura, Pappu Yadav, to a jail outside Bihar. Yadav is now lodged in Beur jail in Patna. A Bench of Justice N. Santosh Hegde and Justice S.B. Sinha, while reserving the verdict, said that jails would not be allowed to be converted into "headquarters of crime." It directed the CBI to seize all documents pertaining to Mr. Yadav's treatment in hospital while he was in judicial custody as an accused in the Ajit Sarkar murder case and produce them in court in two weeks.

New Indian Express, 4 February 2005

### **Three held, Rs 3 lakh worth liquor seized**

VISAKHAPATNAM: Three persons - D Prasad, Anjay and Harindar - were arrested at three different places in Allipuram today and 82 imported scotch whisky bottles, seven Royal Stag bottles, 16 litre red wine and 54 tin beers, all worth Rs 3 lakh, were seized from them. The raids were conducted under the supervision of sub-divisional prohibition and excise task force officer Y Venkata Rao.

The Hindu, 5 February 2005

### **Many facing criminal charges in fray** (K. Balchand)

PATNA, FEB. 4. A dozen persons facing criminal charges have joined the electoral fray in Bihar. And, where they are not contesting themselves, they have fielded their wives, mostly on the symbols of parties such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Lok Janshakti Party and the Janata Dal (United). The Election Commission had issued a directive that all non-bailable arrest warrants be executed before the commencement of the election process. There are more than 20,000 non-bailable arrest warrants pending execution in the State. The Patna High Court had directed that the police arrest all candidates evading the law.

The Hindu, 5 February 2005

### **Kolkata college girl abducted**

KOLKATA, FEB. 4. A businessman's daughter was abducted today in broad daylight from the Salt Lake area near here. Four armed men dragged Roma (20), daughter of Satyanarayan Jhavar of Salt Lake's CB Block, out of her car and whisked her away in a van this morning. At the traffic island at CA Block, a van blocked the car. Four young men got down from the van and took her away at gunpoint. It is believed that within an hour, the kidnappers used Roma's mobile phone to demand a ransom of Rs. 50 lakhs. The police were, however, tight-lipped about such a demand.

The Hindu, 5 February 2005

### **Legal position on convicts contesting elections**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 4. If a member of Parliament or Legislative Assembly is convicted by a court during his tenure, he or she cannot contest the next elections on the expiry of the term, taking advantage of the "exception" clause in the election law, the Supreme Court has held. Under Section 8 (4) of the Representation of the People Act, sitting MLAs and MPs, if convicted and sentenced to more than two years imprisonment during their tenure, can continue if their appeal against the order of conviction is pending with a higher court and if the sentence has been stayed. The Supreme Court on January 12 held that the object of the saving clause was to protect the strength of the House and that of the party concerned.

The Hindu, 5 February 2005

### **Hyderabad link unravelled**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 4. The Cyberabad police have stumbled upon Hyderabad connection to the killing of the Telugu Desam MLA, Paritala Ravindra, with the busting of a seven-member gang allegedly responsible for a series of killings. The gang leader, Patlolla Goverdhan Reddy, told the police that Julakanti Srinivas Reddy, prime accused in the case, was his gang's

sympathiser. Reddy said at a press conference, where he was produced here today that he had conducted a recce of several places in Anantapur two months ago with his associates.

The Hindu, 7 February 2005

**Six nabbed for Kolkata student's abduction**

KOLKATA, FEB. 6. A day after the return of kidnapped college student Roma Jhavar, police today said it had arrested six persons, claiming they were directly related to the crime. "During raids since last night and into this morning, we have been able to arrest six persons who had direct links with the abduction of Roma Jhavar," the IGP (Law and Order), Chayan Mukherjee, told a press conference here. Mr. Mukherjee said that the six would be produced before the sub-divisional judicial magistrate's court at Salt Lake tomorrow. "A few more" persons were expected to be nabbed in a couple of days, he added.

The Hindu, 7 February 2005

**Underworld link to Paritala murder? (Marri Ramu)**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 6. Close on the heels of evidence about a Hyderabad connection, police have chanced upon a Mumbai underworld link, albeit an indirect one, to the killing of Paritala Ravindra. Police sources say underworld gangs of Mumbai supplied some arms and ammunition used in the killing of Ravi. However, they made it clear that the mafia gangs did not have any direct enmity with Ravi. Police believe the weapons used in Ravi's killing could have been part of the Malaysia consignment. Investigations are now centred on whether the deal between Rajan's associate and Ravi's killers went beyond the monetary angle.

The Hindu, 7 February 2005

**Alleged robber killed in shootout**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 6. A 22-year-old man, allegedly involved in cases of robbery and dacoity, was killed and his accomplice arrested following an encounter with the Special Staff of the North-East Delhi on Sunday. Two country-made pistols and seven live cartridges were recovered. According to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (North-East Delhi), Anurag Kumar, Constable Surender Singh received a tip-off that some members of Ali Sher Gang would assemble in a park at New Usmanpur. Subsequently, a Special Staff team laid a trap near the park.

The Hindu, 8 February 2005

**Tehelka: CBI files 2 more cases**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 7. The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered two more cases relating to the Tehelka issue under Sections 9 and 10 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. While the first case was registered against a retired Lt-Colonel and a retired Major-General of the Army, the second was lodged against an individual who was the then treasurer of a political party. The agency earlier registered five cases on December 6 last against some persons, including politicians and officials of the Defence Ministry, for alleged corruption in defence deals.

The Assam Tribune, 9 February 2005

**Ganja worth Rs 2.51 cr seized, 6 held**

GUWAHATI, Feb 8 - In one of the biggest seizures of banned narcotics made in the State, sleuths of the Customs officials this morning seized nearly ten tonnes (9,733 kg to be precise) of contraband ganja valued at Rs 2.51 crore near Khetri. Six persons have also been arrested in this connection and the two trucks seized. Significantly, the two trucks used for carrying the narcotics had number plates that bore close resemblance to those used by the Border Security Force (BSF). According to Customs sources, the culprits resorted to the ploy of faking the number plates to avoid any suspicion and hoodwink the people.

The Hindu, 9 February 2005

**'Nexus between sandal mafia, Minister'**

KOCHI, FEB. 8. The Kerala High Court today observed that ordering of a vigilance inquiry against the forest officials who conducted raids on a factory showed that the accused in the case had direct access to the Minister for Forests, K.P. Vishwanathan, and were capable of getting any order from the State Government for the asking. Justice K. Padmanabhan Nair said this while dismissing anticipatory-bail petitions filed by V. Musthapha, general manager, Walayar Rural Industries, and five other accused.

The Hindu, 9 February 2005

**Excise sleuths seize ganja; two arrested**

KOLLAM, FEB. 8. Sleuths from the Chathannur Excise circle today seized 7.5 kg of ganja from a woman who arrived by train at the Sasthamcotta railway station last night. The woman, a native of Kottarakara, has been arrested. She was identified as Sheeba, 28. An autorickshaw driver waiting with his vehicle to pick up Sheeba was also arrested from the railway station premises. He has been identified as Shiyaz, 20, also a native of Kottarakara. The Excise inspector, B. Suresh, who led the team, said the arrests and the seizure were made following information provided by the Additional Excise Commissioner, Paul Leslie. He said the seized ganja was estimated at Rs. 3 lakh in the dope market.

The Hindu, 9 February 2005

**Two arrested, illicit liquor seized**

DAVANGERE, FEB. 8. The police have arrested two persons, who were allegedly involved in manufacturing illicit liquor and seized illicit liquor worth Rs. 6 lakhs. The police said that the liquor was being manufactured by Srikanth Bagale (33) of Hubli and Shankar bagale (24) of Gadag at an aluminium factory on P.B. Road. The accused bottled and sold the liquor in the name of famous branded.

The Hindu, 9 February 2005

**Fake rubber stamp racket busted**

COIMBATORE, FEB. 8. The Coimbatore City Police have busted a fake rubber stamp-cum-forged document racket and seized more than 20 forged rubber stamps meant for official use from four persons. Following a complaint from a ministerial staff in the subordinate judiciary, the City Police began a probe. The court staff had expressed doubts about the possibility of the documents and rubber stamps being forged when an accused moved for bail in a criminal case.

The Hindu, 10 February 2005

**Fake visa racket busted**

CHENNAI, FEB. 9. Flower Bazaar police have arrested a gang involved in cheating people by offering them fake visas for overseas employment. According to police, a special police party recently arrested Pazhamalai and Ganapathy on suspicion on Walltax Road, and recovered a number of Indian passports from them. Their interrogation led to the arrest of the others involved in making the fake visas provided to youths seeking employment in the Gulf. The gang got Rs. 50,000 for each visa.

The Hindu, 10 February 2005

**Government not sincere in taking on mafia: Achuthanandan**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB. 9. The Leader of the Opposition, V. S. Achuthanandan, has expressed his doubts about the UDF Government's sincerity in tackling the sandalwood mafia. Winding up the general discussions on the budget, Mr. Achuthanandan pointed out that he had repeatedly brought to the notice of the Government the issue of plundering of forest wealth and sandalwood smuggling. He had brought it to the notice of the then Chief Minister, A. K. Antony, and the then Forest Minister, K. Sudhakaran. However, nothing came out of it. "Even though the Forest Minister, K. P. Vishwanathan's resignation was a welcome move, it is not an attestation of the Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy's sincerity of purpose," he said.

The Hindu, 10 February 2005

**Poppy cultivation detected in Kolar village**

BANGALORE, FEB. 9. In what is said to be the first such instance in the State, the Excise officials on Wednesday detected illicit poppy cultivation at a village in Malur taluk of Kolar district. The Inspector-General of Police (Central Range), Shankar Mahadev Bidari, who guided the raids, told The Hindu that poppy had been cultivated on two acres and 17 guntas of land at Dinneri Harohalli, off Masti, 70 km from Bangalore. The land, Survey No. 137, belongs to Puttamma and poppy was being cultivated by her son, Narayanaswamy, who is at large, Mr. Bidari said. The raid party cut and seized nearly 20 tonnes of the crop.

The Hindu, 10 February 2005

**Seven arrested on drugs charge**

MANGALORE, FEB. 9. The Highway Patrol squad on Tuesday arrested seven persons who were allegedly trying to sell brown sugar near Padil bridge in Mangalore Rural (Kankanady) Police Station limits. The police said the squad spotted a car parked on the road. While one person escaped, the police arrested seven others. The police found a substance that looked like brown sugar packed in plastic bags.

Denver Post, 10 February 2005

**Afghan opium poppy crops shrink**

GIRDI GHOUS: Across Afghanistan, government officials and foreign aid workers who monitor poppy cultivation have reached a remarkable conclusion: One year after Afghan farmers planted the largest amount of poppy in their nation's history and provided the world with nearly 90 percent of its opium supply, many of them have stopped growing it. Poppy farming, officials said, may have declined by as much as 70 percent in three provinces that together account for more than half of Afghanistan's production: Nangahar in the east, Helmand in the south and Badakhshan in the north.

The Hindu, 15 February 2005

**Court orders transfer of Pappu Yadav to Tihar jail**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 14. The Supreme Court today ordered that the Rashtriya Janata Dal member of Parliament, Pappu Yadav, who is an accused in the Ajit Sarkar murder case, be shifted from Beur prison in Patna to Tihar jail in Delhi to "prevent him from tampering with evidence and threatening the witnesses." A Bench of Justice N. Santosh Hegde and Justice S.B. Sinha, passed the order on petitions filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation and Kalyan Chandra Sarkar, brother of Ajit Sarkar, expressing apprehension about the activities of Pappu Yadav inside and outside the jail and seeking a direction for his transfer to a jail outside Bihar. The Judges said the authorities should follow the rules and no special privileges should be given to the accused.

The Hindu, 16 February 2005

**Boy found dead (UNI)**

HOSHIARPUR (PUNJAB), FEB. 15. A day after he was abducted, the body of the 16-year-old schoolboy was found on a field near here by police. Two of his alleged kidnapers have been arrested.

The Hindu, 16 February 2005

**Court refrains police from executing warrants**

MUMBAI, FEB.15. The Bombay High Court today asked the Mumbai police to refrain from executing non-bailable warrants issued against Gutka barons Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal, and Jagdish Joshi, accused of having links with underworld, until their plea was heard tomorrow. Justice R. M. S. Khandeparkar and Justice P. V. Kakade adjourned to tomorrow the petitions filed by Dhariwal and Joshi, owners of Manikchand and Goa Gutka respectively, challenging the non-bailable warrants issued by a MCOCA court against them. — PTI

The Hindu, 16 February 2005

**Sex scandal in Ahmedabad**

AHMEDABAD, FEB. 15. The Ahmedabad police have claimed to have busted a sex scandal in some temples of the Swaminarayan Vadtal sect. The Additional Police Commissioner (Crime Branch), D.G. Vanjhara, said that a "sadhu" of the sect in the Swaminarayan temple in Junagadh and three alleged touts, described as followers of the sect, were arrested in this connection. Some compact discs (CDs), reportedly containing sexual acts carried out by Swaminarayan sadhus in Junagadh, Ahmedabad, Surat and Broach, were also seized by the police. Mr. Vanjhara said four women shown in the CDs had been identified.

Dawn, 16 February 2005

**FIA unit on human smuggling functional (Zulqernain Tahir)**

LAHORE, Feb 15: Will the recently established Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Federal Investigation Agency check human smuggling? After losing its important anti-crime and economic-crime wings to the National Accountability Bureau a couple of months ago, the agency has now become immigration oriented. Only a handful of the employees of both wings opted to join NAB and those who were working with the agency on deputation have been sent back to their parent departments. However, to accommodate the staff of these wings the agency is creating new cells.

The Hindu, 17 Feb. 05

**Gutkha case deferred**

MUMBAI, FEB. 16. The Bombay High Court today deferred till February 21 the hearing on petitions by Gutkha barons Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal and Jagdish Joshi, challenging non-bailable warrants issued by a special court against them. — PTI

Dawn, 17 February 2005

**Fight against drugs: US to help Pakistan, says envoy**

RAWALPINDI, Feb 16: US Ambassador to Pakistan Ryan C. Crocker has said his government intends to cooperate with Islamabad in the fight against drugs. He was speaking at the closing ceremony of a two-day seminar on the 'Role of Women in Drug Abuse Prevention' organized by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF). Mr Crocker said the US government had been working in partnership with Pakistan for the last 20 years to prevent drug abuse, and wished to continue this cooperation in future as well. The US counter-narcotics programmes were aimed at inhibiting the flow of drugs through Pakistan and reduce its demand within the country, he said.

The Hindu, 18 February 2005

**Cheats' gang busted, five arrested**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 17. Five persons, who allegedly used to duped people of huge amount of money by posing as officials from the enforcement branch of private power distribution company, NDPL, and threatening to slap huge fines for using "tampered meters", have been arrested by the North Delhi police. One of the accused was cousin of a sub-contractor of the firm which had been authorised to install electric meters of the subscribers.

The Hindu, 18 February 2005

**Dacoits surrender before Minister**

BHOPAL, FEB.17. The gang of dacoits led by Arvind Gujar, wanted in about 45 cases of dacoity, kidnapping and murder, surrendered at the district Reserve Police lines at Bhind in Madhya Pradesh today. Arvind Gujar was carrying a reward of Rs.20,000 in Uttar Pradesh and Rs.10,000 in Madhya Pradesh. The gang had been operating in the Gwalior region and across the border in Uttar Pradesh. In all, eight dacoits, including the gang leader Arvind Gujar and his wife Sheela, surrendered with their weapons before the State Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Rustam Singh and the Minister of State for Home, Jagdeesh Dewda. This gang was carrying weapons. While the gang leader surrendered with an AK-47 rifle, the others were carrying an SLR semi-automatic rifle, .315 bore guns, carbine, mauser and .303 guns.

Dawn, 18 February 2005

**PM concerned over poppy cultivation in Afghanistan**

RAWALPINDI, Feb 17: Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has expressed concern over the increase in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, saying it will have a negative impact on Pakistan in particular and the world at large. He was talking to reporters at the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) headquarters on Thursday. "The increase in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is a negative

development. It will have negative fallout on Pakistan and other countries. We are in contact with the Afghan government and are also planning to take action against laboratories which deal in processing of opium," he said. About Pakistan, the prime minister said the government had controlled poppy cultivation to a large extent and poppy growers had been provided alternative means of earning.

The Hindu, 19 February 2005

**Hurriyat leader in police net**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 18. The Hurriyat leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, was today sent to four-day police custody. He was arrested here last evening with fake Indian currency outside the Pakistan High Commission. — UNI

The Hindu, 19 February 2005

**Shahbuddin gets bail**

PATNA, FEB. 18. Even as the Patna High Court today granted bail to the Rashtriya Janata Dal MP, Md. Shahbuddin, the Siwan District Magistrate, C.K. Anil, ordered his externment from the district for one year. The bench of Justice Rajendra Prasad granted bail to Mr. Shahbuddin in connection with the kidnapping and murder of the CPI(ML) worker, Munna Chaudhary, about four years ago. Mr. Shahbuddin is likely to be released on Monday as he had received bail in the other cases filed against him. Mr. Shahbuddin had been shifted to the Patna Central Jail from the Siwan Jail at the orders of the Election Commission.

Daily Excelsior, 21 February 2005

**CBI seizes shahtoosh shawls worth lakhs**

NEW DELHI, Feb 20: CBI today claimed to have seized banned shahtoosh shawls worth lakhs of rupees from one of the biggest showrooms in Chandigarh. Acting on a lead given by the Wild Life Trust of India, eight original shahtoosh shawls and 2-3 pashmina mixed shawls were recovered today from a showroom in sector 17 of the city, CBI sources said. The Centre had banned trading in shahtoosh shawls. A senior CBI officer told PTI in Chandigarh tonight that official from the Delhi Bureau of the agency had raided one of the shop of a local group having outlet in different sector of the Union Territory.

The Hindu, 22 February 2005

**RJD MP's detention ordered**

PATNA, FEB. 21. The Siwan District Magistrate, C.K. Anil, today invoked the provisions of the Bihar Crime Control Act (CCA), 1981, to order the detention of the Rashtriya Janata Dal MP, Md. Shahbuddin at the Patna Central Jail. The Patna High Court on Friday granted bail to Mr. Shahbuddin in the case relating to the murder of the CPI (ML) worker, Munna Chaudhary. The Magistrate ordered that Mr. Shahbuddin be detained till February 28, a day after the completion of the counting process scheduled for February 27.

The Hindu, 23 February 2005

**14 candidates externed in Bihar (K. Balchand)**

PATNA, FEB. 22. Three more MPs, including the Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, have been externed from their respective districts on the eve of the third phase of polling in 93 constituencies in Bihar tomorrow. The East Champaran district authorities directed Mr. Singh not to be present in the district during the polling process tomorrow. Similarly, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP, Raghunath Jha, has been asked to keep away from West Champaran and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) MP, Suraj Bhan Singh, from Patna district. Two candidates from the Kateya constituency in Gopalganj have also been ordered out of the district, one of whom has been detained under the Crime Control Act.

The Hindu, 23 February 2005

**Court quashes gutka firm owner's plea**

MUMBAI, FEB. 22. A Division Bench of the Bombay High Court today dismissed a petition filed by Rasiklal Dhariwal, owner of Manikchand Gutka, challenging the non-bailable arrest warrant in his name. The Mumbai police are seeking to question Mr. Dhariwal and Jagdish Joshi, owner of Goa Gutka, on their alleged links with the underworld kingpin, Dawood Ibrahim. Both have red corner notices in their names issued by Interpol and are said to be in Dubai. Joshi has also challenged the warrant in the High Court.

The Hindu, 23 February 2005

**Multi-passport racket busted**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 22. Task Force officials on Tuesday busted what they called multi-passport racket with the arrest of six persons, including two employees of the Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad. Two other accused, including a woman, were still at large, the Task Force DCP, M. Shiva Prasad, told a press conference. The arrested passport office employees - Kottur Saivara Prasad (51) and Pilli Gopala Krishna (47) - allegedly helped a businessman, Boji Reddy Jagannatham (48), in getting four passports issued with different names. Asked as to how he managed to get passports with different names, the Additional Commissioner of Police (Co-ordination), A.K. Khan, made no bones about the possible connivance of the city police special branch wing.

The Hindu, 23 February 2005

**Cocaine in exchange of heroin (Devesh K. Pandey)**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 22. With a gradual increase in consumption of cocaine and availability of high-quality white heroin from Afghanistan, international drug traffickers have adopted new ways of transactions among themselves. Discarding the old modus operandi of buying consignments against monetary payments, they are now relying more on the barter system where cocaine is exchanged for heroin. The trend has been noticed in the recent cases unearthed by the Delhi unit of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). This past week, the NCB arrested three Central African nationals from whom they recovered 400 gm of cocaine and 5 kg of heroin. While the cocaine seized from the accused is suspected to have been smuggled in from Latin American countries, the NCB officials believe that the seized heroin originated from Afghanistan, which was apparently smuggled either through Jammu or via Amritsar from Pakistan.

Kantipur Online, 23 February 2005

**Polish national caught with 14 kg of hashish**

KATHMANDU, Feb 21 - Police arrested Dominik Dawidczyk, a Polish national, with 14.4 kilograms of hashish at Tribhuvan International Airport on Sunday evening. Dawidczyk was on a Qatar Airways flight to Doha. Upon interrogation by the police on Monday, Dawidczyk said that he was on his way to London via Doha. The drugs were hidden under false bottoms in two out of Dawidczyk's three suitcases. Police discovered the contraband when the luggage was scanned with X-rays. (yv)

The Hindu, 24 February 2005

**Alleged contract killer held**

NEW DELHI, FEB.23. An alleged contract killer, who was hired to eliminate a person at Ahmedabad in Gujarat, was arrested from Mangolpuri in North-West Delhi by a special team of the Crime Branch on Tuesday. A country-made firearm was recovered from his possession. Acting on a tip-off that a criminal would pass by Kala Mandir Cinema at Mangolpuri, the police laid a trap and intercepted his scooter. During interrogation, he identified himself as Nadeem Malik, a resident of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. The couple had eloped in October last. Since the groom was from another community, the girl's family was upset over the marriage. To take revenge, her maternal uncle, Satish, allegedly contacted Nadeem in December to kill Afzal and paid him Rs. 25,000 in advance.

New Indian Express, 24 February 2005

**Election special: Fourteen criminals killed, 26,000 arrested in Bihar**

PATNA: Fourteen dreaded criminals have been killed in encounters and over 26,000 anti-socials including Naxal extremists arrested so far in special security drive of the Bihar police during past one month to conduct peaceful Assembly elections, police said on Wednesday. Inspector General of Police (headquarters) Neelmani told PTI altogether 20 encounters took place during past one month in which 14 dreaded criminals were killed at separate places and 26,218 anti-socials including 73 Naxal extremists have been arrested across Bihar. Around 844 firearms were seized and 37 illegal minigun factories unearthed during the period from different areas, he said.

The Hindu, 25 February 2005

**Shahbuddin released**

PATNA, FEB. 24. The Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, today cancelled the detention of the Rashtriya Janata Dal MP, Mohammad Shahbuddin, under the Bihar Crime Control Act (CCA) which paved the way for his release from the Patna Central Jail, Beur. The Siwan District Magistrate (DM), C.K. Anil, had ordered his detention under the CCA at the Patna Central Jail till February 28 soon after the Patna High Court granted him bail in the Munna Chaudhary murder case last Friday. Meanwhile, the Patna High Court today issued a notice to the Siwan DM to explain the ground on which he ordered the detention of Mr. Shahbuddin. He has to file his affidavit by Monday. Mr. Shahbuddin has challenged the DM's order in court.

Daily Excelsior, 25 February 2005

**BSF, Pak Rangers discuss steps to check smuggling**

WAGAH, Feb 24: In view of the improved relations between India and Pakistan, the Border Security Force (BSF) and their counterparts the Pakistan Rangers have decided to further strengthen vigil along the border in Punjab to check trans-border smuggling and infiltration. This decision was taken at the quarterly meeting between senior officials of the BSF (Punjab sector) and the Rangers held on the Pakistan side of this joint border check-post late yesterday evening. The Indian side was led by BSF, DIG (Ferozpur Range) Paramjit Singh while the Rangers were led by Brig Sakhi Marzan, incharge of the Pak-Punjab sector.

New Indian Express, 25 February 2005

**Gangster's murder triggers tension**

VILLUPURAM: The murder of Minnal Raja, a notorious gangster with political links, triggered tension here on Thursday. Fearing violence, a large number of shops here put up shutters. Villupuram police have arrested five persons, who are suspected to be involved in the brutal murder. Police suspect that the feud between former associates of his gang and Raja (40), caused the murder. According to Villupuram police, the gangster was allegedly involved in 'kattapanchayat', dacoity, extortion and murder.

The Hindu, 26 February 2005

**CBI questions gutka company owner**

MUMBAI, FEB. 25. Jagdish Joshi, owner of Goa Gutka, was today interrogated by a Central Bureau of Investigation team, probing his alleged links with the underworld. Mr. Joshi arrived at the Central Bureau of Investigation office near the State

Secretariat in south Mumbai around 12.30 pm accompanied by his lawyer, Ganesh Gole, and his brother, Arun Joshi. He was questioned for several hours. CBI officials refused to comment, but sources said it was likely that Mr. Joshi would be questioned till he is produced in the Bombay High Court on Monday.

The Hindu, 26 February 2005

**Colour TV, helpers for Pappu in Tihar**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 25. Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, the Member of Parliament from Mahdepura who was recently shifted from Beur Jail in Patna to Tihar Central Jail here following orders from the Supreme Court, has been provided with a colour television set and two helpers in his ward. For their part, the prison authorities said there was nothing unusual about it. The Court had earlier directed that he should not be accorded any special treatment in prison. Lodged in the high-security Jail No. 3, the MP, charged with the murder of CPI (M) leader Ajit Sarkar, had demanded a colour television, home-made food and helpers. The prison authorities have allowed him a colour television set and two helpers but have denied permission for home-made food.

The Hindu, 27 February 2005

**Legal hurdles cleared for Monica Bedi's extradition**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 26. Legal hurdles have been cleared for extradition of Monica Bedi, a former Bollywood starlet, from Portugal to India. She was arrested on September 18, 2002 by the police in Lisbon along with underworld don Abu Salem Ansari and was found in possession of a forged passport. Abu Salem is the key accused in the March 1993 Bombay serial blasts case. The Constitutional Court of Portugal has unanimously dismissed the appeal of Ms. Bedi on February 24 filed against its preliminary decision of January 18, 2005, the Central Bureau of Investigation said in a release here today.

The Hindu, 28 February 2005

**Gang held on extortion charge; pipe bombs, knives seized**

HYDERABAD, FEB. 27. Seven members of a gang, who allegedly used to extort money from people claiming themselves as naxalites, were arrested by the Sanathnagar police on Sunday. Two pipe bombs, four knives and an air pistol were seized, the Balanagar ACP, M. Satyanarayana Reddy, said at a press conference here.

The Hindu, 28 February 2005

**CBI seizes fake ration cards for kerosene**

NEW DELHI, FEB. 27. The Food and Supplies Department of the Delhi Government is turning out to be can of worms. After last month's raids on a number of officials including the head of the enforcement wing of the Department, another series of 'joint inspections' by the Central Bureau of Investigation has "uncovered" a well planned modus operandi to not only hoodwink the system but also divert and sell kerosene meant for the poor and under-privileged in the open market in black. These developments should wake the Delhi Government up from its slumber as it had claimed that everything was working smoothly and efficiently. It is also a wake up call for the Food and Supplies Minister, Raj Kumar Chauhan, to set his house in order.