

Foundation Raises \$325,000 for Schools in India

By A STAFF WRITER

The Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation held a benefit concert May 15 in Edison, N.J., raising more than \$175,000. The funds will benefit Ekal Vidyalaya, a nonprofit that works to educate children in rural India.

The foundation held two other benefit concerts in New Jersey, in Mahwah and Cherry Hill, raising a total of \$325,000 from the three events, according to a press release.

The May 15 event featured popular singer Sanjeevani Bhelande, the first winner of the "Sa Re Ga Ma" contest on Zee TV, and her group and was held at the Vrundavan Temple Auditorium in Edison.

Bhelande took the audience down memory lane, performing



Playback singer Sanjeevani Bhelande and her group performs at the Ekal Vidyalaya fundraiser at the Vrundavan Temple Auditorium in Edison, N.J., May 15.

songs by Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsle, Noor Jahan and Geeta Dutt. The concert was extended by an hour due to audience

requests.

For \$365 a year (a dollar-a-day), one Ekal Vidyalaya provides nonformal basic education and

hygiene training to a group of 30 to 40 underprivileged children in remote tribal villages in India, the organization said.

Exchange Students From Mumbai Enjoy NYU Stint

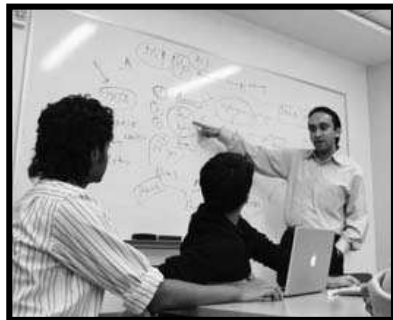
By BHARGAVI KULKARNI

Susan Jose, a third-year B.Com student from St. Xavier's College in Mumbai, had been working part-time and living alone in Mumbai, quite like a New Yorker. So she effortlessly adapted to life in New York City in just a week.

Jose is part of a group of 40 undergraduate students from Mumbai attending the Stern School of Business' India Leadership Exchange Program at New York University.

"I want to take the culture of New York with me," she told Desi Talk. "I want to take the attitude, the friendliness and incorporate that into my daily life."

The students, many of whom could not otherwise afford to travel to and study in the United States, are participating in a two-week program designed to foster greater intellectual exchange



Exchange students from Mumbai in class with professor Venkataramani Srivatsan.

between the two countries and deepen each student's understanding of the global business environment.

The program is held in partnership with Mumbai's St. Xavier's College and H.R. College of Commerce and was specifically designed for Indian scholarship students who have never been abroad before.

During their stay in New York, Indian students visited corporates; attended lectures on globalization and multinational organizations, as well as the political, cultural, national and legal environments surrounding international business; toured the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the United Nations.

"Exposing students who would not otherwise have an opportunity to travel abroad and increase their basic level of awareness on fundamental issues," is the main aim of the program, Stern Professor Venkataramani Srivatsan, the academic director of the program, told Desi Talk.

"The program was conceived

to make an impact on these students' international learning."

Karan Shah, a second-year marketing student from H.R. College agrees. "The program has opened up my mind in just a week," he told Desi Talk. "It has given me a new dimension to look at things."

His course-mate, Ankiti Bose, a student of economics at St. Xavier's, feels the program has helped her understand the social, cultural, political and economic perspectives of international business.

Most of the students, who have left home for the first time feel living alone is also teaching them independence.

"The process of traveling abroad in itself was a learning experience," Rajeev Nandodkar, a student of business management at H.R. College, said. He sees the program as a forum to put forth ideas "It's a whole new learning experience," he said.

Pakistan Caterer, Others Held for Ties to Times Square Bomb Plot

By KARIN BRULLIARD AND SHAIQ HUSSAIN

— ISLAMABAD, Pakistan
Pakistani authorities have detained the co-owner of an upscale catering company in the capital and at least four other men in connection with the Times Square bomb plot, a Pakistani intelligence official said May 21.

The U.S. Embassy issued a warning to Americans in Pakistan about Hanif Rajput Catering Service, saying that "terrorist groups may have established links" to it. The unusual alert said the company was owned by a father and son, but it did not elaborate on its alleged ties to militants.

A Pakistani intelligence source who spoke on the condition of anonymity said that the son, Salman Ashraf Khan, 35, was arrested about 10 days ago on suspicion of links to Faisal Shahzad, the Pakistani American accused of the attempted bombing in New York. Four or five other people were also arrested in Islamabad, including at least one who was a close friend of Khan, the official said. Hanif Rajput has catered elite events in the capital, including U.S. Embassy functions.

Reached briefly by telephone early Saturday, Rana Ashraf Khan, Khan's father, said his son went missing on the morning of May 10 after leaving his home for work.

Rana Ashraf Khan said that he had heard nothing from his son since and that authorities had given him no information.

According to the caterer's website, Khan completed studies in Houston in 2001, then worked his way up in the family business to become vice president. It said he had "breathed new fire" into the firm's outdoor catering services.

Among the others arrested were an employee of Telenor, a cellphone company, and a man who is involved in a computer business in Islamabad, the intelligence official said.

The U.S. warning said American government personnel had been instructed to avoid patronizing the caterer. U.S. officials had relayed information about the caterer's suspected terrorism links to Pakistani authorities "for their action," the alert said. U.S. officials have said the failed Times Square bombing was supported by the Pakistani Taliban, an amorphous militant group based in Pakistan's lawless frontier areas.

— THE WASHINGTON POST

Skill Development Center Opens Branch in N.J.



Brainbrain USA, a skill development program for children between 5-14 years, inaugurated a new center in Bridgewater, N.J., on May 23. Rajni Varshney, director, Brainbrain USA, explained the organization's specialization in advanced abacus/Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), according to a press release. Seen in the photo are, from left, Anurag Varshney, founder Brainbrain USA; Sarah, Brainbrain trainer; Larry, franchisee in-charge; Mia, Brainbrain trainer; Rajni Varshney, Director, Brainbrain USA; Avanti, Brainbrain student; Aryaman, Brainbrain student; Will Davis, owner, Brainbrain Bridgewater center with guests at the inauguration.