

■ **Manhattan**

## HSBC tops in poll of world's most valuable banking brands

HSBC, Europe's largest bank by market value, has been named the world's most valuable banking brand according to the Banker magazine's Top 500 Financial Brands listing (1).

It also achieved the highest possible triple 'A' brand rating.

The announcement made on February 18 followed last year's Interbrand study of the world's most valuable brands across all sectors which saw HSBC jump five places to 23, the second best growth performance of the top 40 companies surveyed.

Chris Clark, Head of Group Marketing, HSBC, said, "In just 10 years the HSBC brand has become a very powerful asset. Our focus on emerging markets will be

underpinned by the strength of the brand.

Many customers across all our business lines are increasingly looking for services and solutions with an international dimension. We are very well placed to help them and the brand sets out our credentials as these trends develop."

He further said, "A great example of this was the launch of HSBC Premier in September last year. This was a fabulous illustration of the brand in action.

Premier customers now have the ability to open accounts in 37 different countries and we can assist them wherever they are in the world using our network of branches and dedicated relationship managers."

Meanwhile, the bank opened a new

branch on March 6 in Milpitas, California on East Calaveras Boulevard.

It was inaugurated by Dominic O'Hagan, Executive Vice President and Regional President; Brian Gregson, Senior Vice President and District Executive; Robert Paedon, Vice President and Branch Manager, all of HSBC Bank and other guests including Assemblyman Alberto Torrico, Mayor Jose Esteves and Nicky Wu, President of Milpitas Chamber of Commerce.

The bank donated \$5000 each to two charities on the occasion - Friends of Children with Special Needs and California Congress of Parents, Teachers and Students of Milpitas.

*(Compiled from a press release by Shomik Chaudhuri)*

## Columbia University expands financial aid for undergraduates

Columbia University recently announced that students from families with incomes below \$60,000 attending Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) will no longer be expected to borrow or contribute any of their income or assets to tuition, room, board and other fees beginning in the next academic year.

At the same time, Columbia will eliminate loans for all new and continuing students in the College and SEAS who are eligible for financial aid, regardless of family income, and replace them with University grants. This enhancement could add as much as \$20,000 in Columbia-funded grants to each four-year aid package.

Families with incomes between \$60,000 and \$100,000 will see a significant reduction in the amount parents are expected to contribute toward tuition and other costs. For example, a family with \$75,000 in income and typical assets will see their contribution decrease by approximately one-half. Through the replacement of need-based loans with grants, a student from a family with an income of \$150,000 who is eligible for financial aid may receive as much as \$5,000 per year in aid instead of a loan of that amount.

"Columbia has a record of attracting among the most socio economically diverse undergraduate student populations among our peer institutions through our commitment to need-blind admissions," said University President Lee C.

Bollinger. "We are both proud of that diversity and determined to maintain it by expanding aid to the extent our resources allow so that our students will continue to benefit from the full range of experiences that are part of a Columbia

education and, we hope, part of the lives they choose to lead in the future because of those experiences."

*(Compiled from a press release by Bhargavi Kulkarni)*

## New York Life of Greater N.Y. inducts Patel

Manoj Patel, a partner in New York Life's Greater Chicago General Office, has been inducted in the Greater New York management team. This was announced recently by Jon Jaramillo, the Managing Partner of New York Life's Greater New York General Office in Manhattan.

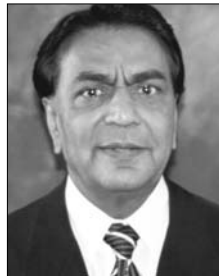
Patel joined New York Life in 1982 in Chicago and was recognized as his office's 'Rookie of the Year' for his production record. As an agent, he consistently qualified for both New York Life's production councils and the industry's prestigious 'Million Dollar Roundtable'. His best production achievement was his qual-

ification for New York Life's top production group, the prestigious Chairman's Council, in 1995.

Patel became a full-time Sales Manager with New York Life in May of 1995 recruiting, developing and managing agents. He received many awards and distinctions including his recognition as the top Sales Manager in the West Central Zone in 2000 with unit production of over \$2 million in new life premiums.

Patel was promoted to Partner in the Greater Chicago General Office under Managing Partner, Jon Jaramillo. His performance and leadership in the Asian-Indian community and his ability to build one of the top Indian units in the industry were pivotal in this promotion. Now Patel rejoins Jon Jaramillo, in the New York market. He feels that there is great opportunity to expand his efforts and achieve career-long success in the tri-state area.

*(Compiled from a press release by Shomik Chaudhuri)*



Manoj Patel, the new Partner of New York Life's Greater New York General Office in Manhattan

■ **New Jersey**

## Podiatrist Gujral's 'Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center', in Edison

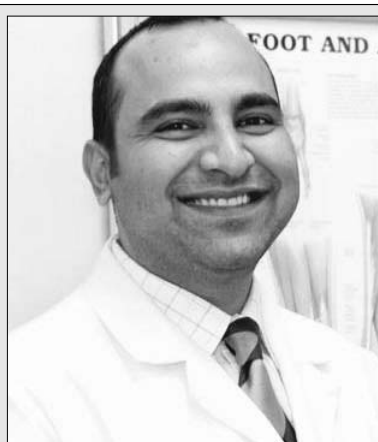
Have you ever suffered from ankle or foot pain, chalking it up to too much exercise or wearing the wrong shoes? Has your child ever awakened crying because of discomforting growing pains? Does anyone you know endure the complications of chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, or gout? If you can answer yes to any one of these questions, it is time to meet a friendly, new face in the community, Dr. Varun Gujral, doctor of Podiatric Medicine.

Dr. Gujral, known as Dr. Ben, practices podiatry, a field of medicine specific to the treatment of the human foot, ankle, and associated structures.

Dr. Ben, a podiatrist, at the forefront of his field with the latest techniques, is proud that as many as 50 to 60 percent of patients who arrive at Affiliated Foot and Ankle in pain leave pain-free.

Timely, continual podiatric care for diabetics is a must. The number of lower extremity amputations in diabetics could be cut in half with timely conservation foot care, and Dr. Ben wants all members of the Edison community to be aware of this fact.

One of Dr. Ben's greatest assets is his ability to communicate openly and compassionately with



Dr. Varun Gujral, known as Dr. Ben.

all of his patients. As Dr. Ben says, "I treat my patients in the same way I would treat my family, because patients put their trust in me." Dr. Ben's multilingual ability (he speaks three Indian languages, Punjab, Hindi, and Gujarati, as well as English) is a skill he says, "allows enhanced

### About the Center

Dr. Ben's practice, 'Affiliated Foot and Ankle Center' is located in Edison at 2163 Oak Tree Road, Suite 108, phone: 732-662-3050 and Center's informative website's address is [www.footdoctorsnj.com](http://www.footdoctorsnj.com). It opened the doors in October, 2007.

The Center treats patients with foot and ankle problems from the common (foot and ankle pain, athlete's foot, plantar warts, bunions, ingrown nails, etc.) to the more serious (diabetes, immunodeficiency diseases, arthritis, ulcerations, foot and ankle deformities, etc.) for patients spanning from pediatrics to geriatrics.

The office offers on-site digital x-rays, ultrasounds, and vascular testing to diagnose and treat ankle and foot problems.

patient care through better communication." Dr. Ben hopes to make the Indian community aware of podiatry and its many medical benefits, an available service they may not know about due to a language barrier or miscommunication.

*(Compiled from a press release)*

■ **Law**

## Teenager is accused of cutting Sikh student's hair

By Michelle Nichols

—NEW YORK

A Pakistani student at a New York City high school was charged with a hate crime on March 14, accused of cutting the waist-length hair of a 15-year-old Sikh.

Queens District Attorney Richard Brown said Umair Ahmed, 17, was charged with menacing as a hate crime, aggravated harassment, and criminal possession of a weapon.

He faces up to seven years in prison, at his April 11 sentencing, if convicted.

"The defendant is not accused of some school-house prank but an attack on the fundamental beliefs of his victim's religion and his freedom to worship freely," Brown said in a statement. "Crimes of hate can never be tolerated here."

Prosecutors said Ahmed approached Vacher Harpal in a school hallway on March 13 armed with a pair of scissors and told him, "I have to cut your hair."

When Harpal asked why and told him it was against his religion, Ahmed allegedly displayed a ring with Arabic inscriptions and stated, "This ring is Allah. If you don't let me cut your hair, I will punch you with this ring," according to prosecutors.

Once inside the bathroom, officials said, Harpal removed his turban while crying and begged Ahmed not to cut his hair, which had never been cut.

"The defendant is then alleged to have used the scissors to cut the (the boy's) hair to the neckline and thrown the hair into the toilet and onto the floor," Brown said.

Sikhs constitute nearly 2 percent of India's 1.1 billion population.

—Reuters

## Lawsuit challenging taxi GPS requirements is withdrawn

The New York City Law Department announced on March 13 that the plaintiffs seeking to stop the Taxi and Limousine Commission's (TLC) program of taxi technology service improvements, including GPS equipment, have withdrawn their lawsuit. The suit, brought last September, sought to prevent the program from going forward as scheduled.

But the court – the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York – rejected the plaintiffs' request last September to grant a preliminary injunction, finding that plaintiffs had failed to demonstrate that they were likely to succeed on any of their claims. The Court signed off on a legal stipulation ending the lawsuit.

The lawsuit had challenged the innovative program initiated by the TLC to provide improved technology in taxicabs that enabled passengers to pay by credit card, to monitor travel on video screens, and to provide automated trip records through GPS equipment. The service enhancement program has been in effect since October 2007, and is viewed by both the TLC and the public as a success.

The plaintiffs, including the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, continued to press their claims after their initial loss in court on the preliminary injunction issue. However, after several months of successful operation of the program, they agreed to withdraw their complaint "with prejudice" – meaning they cannot bring the suit again.

As noted, the Court approved the agreement of discontinuance of this litigation, in which it is agreed that the TLC will continue its enforcement of its rules and regulations, including the requirements for the GPS technology and customer service improvements.

*(Compiled from a press release)*