

Weigh to go, Aarti

PIC/SYED SAMEER ABEDI

AARTI Patel, an American of Indian origin, residing in Dallas (Texas) decided to forge a stronger 'band' with India on her recent vacation here. I know. Poor joke. Yet, one cannot help it. These hazy, lazy, crazy days of summer addles one's brains completely. So, business consultant Aarti underwent, obesity surgery (gastric banding procedure) while in Mumbai on June 19 at the Wockhardt Hospital, Mulund.

Obesity surgeon Dr R Goel operated on Aarti. She will fly back to the US on June 29. Gastric banding is when a band is put around the stomach making a small pouch so that only small amounts of food can stay in there. Obesity surgery is for the morbidly overweight, a last resort when all efforts to lose weight fail. Says Aarti, "I did have a personal instructor but my eating out (with business clients) did not change so I could not lose weight."

So when Aarti stepped off the plane, she was overweight. She had tried losing weight the conventional way prior to the surgery. "With exercise my weight stayed constant, but I did not lose any."

Aarti then decided to go in for surgery after her weight began getting in the way of her regular chores. "I started getting exhausted at the end



BAND AID: Aarti Patel at Wockhardt Hospital

of a working day. I had no energy. My feet started swelling in my stilettos and my knees hurt. I knew it was time for surgery."

Finally, says the 25-year-old woman who hopes her 'load shedding' will help her start a family by the time she is 28 or 29, "Weight is an obsession here in India. It is too much. Here, when people meet you they exclaim: How much weight have you put on? Or

you've lost so much weight! With attitudes being what they are, I am surprised you do not have more cases of anorexia and bulimia. I did the surgery because of health reasons, not just for appearance."

Aarti is now looking forward to an end of the year holiday in the Cayman Islands in the Caribbean Sea, 240 km south of Cuba and 268 km northwest of Jamaica.