

## Govt archives asanas, says yoga can't be patented

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: India is all set to give hot yoga a cold shoulder.

To stop self-styled yoga gurus from claiming copyright to ancient 'asanas' — like Bikram Choudhury's Hot Yoga, which is a set of 26 sequences practised in a heated room — India has completed documenting 1,300 'asanas' that will soon be uploaded on the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, making them public knowledge. Around 250 of these 'asanas' have also been made into video clips, with an expert performing them.

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According to the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and the health ministry's department of **Ayush**, "once the database is up online, patent offices across the world will have a reference point to check on everytime a yoga guru claims patent on a particular 'asana'". **Dr V P Gupta** of **CSIR**, who created **TKDL**, said: "All 26 sequences part of Hot Yoga have been mentioned in Indian yoga books written thousands of years ago."

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## 'No legal challenge to Choudhury'

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New Delhi: The government will not legally challenge Bikram Choudhury on his copyright claims over Hot Yoga. "We won't legally challenge Choudhury. By putting the information in the public domain, the **TKDL** will be a one-stop reference point for patent offices across the world. Every time somebody applies for a patent on yoga, the office can check which ancient Indian book first mentioned it and cancel the application," said **Dr V P Gupta**, creator of the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**.

### **HOT YOGA ROW**

Nine well-known yoga institutions in India have helped with the documentation. "The data will be up online in the next two months. In the first phase, we have videographed 250 'asanas' — the most popular ones. Chances of misappropriation with them are higher. So if somebody wants to teach yoga, he does not have to fight copyright issues. He can just refer to the **TKDL**. At present, anybody teaching Hot Yoga's 26 postures has to pay Choudhury franchisee fee because he holds copyright on them," **Dr Gupta** added.

Yoga is a favourite among Hollywood stars. Oprah swears by it and so do Madonna, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jennifer Aniston, Cameron Diaz and Angelina Jolie.