



Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd

FEBRUARY 6, 2011* | METRO | 38 PAGES | INCLUDING CHENNAI TIMES, TIMESLIFE! AND CLASSIFIEDS | TIMESOFINDIA.COM | EPAPER.TIMESOFINDIA.COM

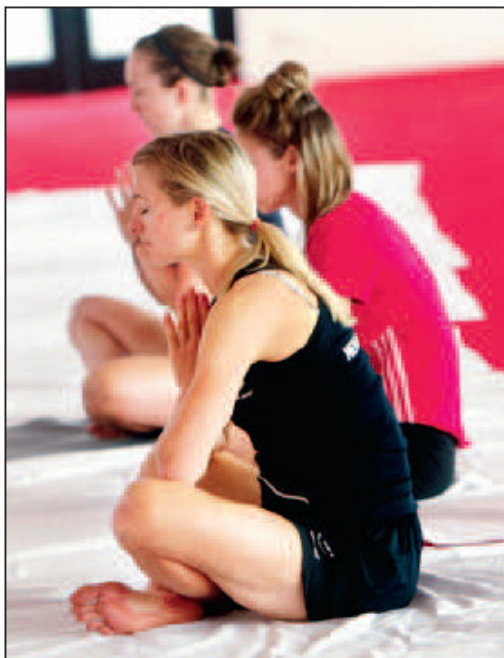
No one can claim copyright on yoga: Govt

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

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

In order to stop self-styled yoga gurus from claiming copyright to ancient 'asanas' — like Bikram Choudhury's Hot Yoga, a set of 26 sequences practised in a heated room — India has completed documenting 1,300 postures, which will soon be uploaded on the country's **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.

According to the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and the Union 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 every time a yoga guru claims patent on a particular 'asana'."



TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: Yoga gurus in the West will no longer be able to claim copyright on any 'asanas' or postures

CSIR's Dr V P Gupta, who created **TKDL**, told TOI, "All the 26 sequences, which are part of Hot Yoga, have been mentioned in Indian yoga books written thousands of years ago."

He added, "However, we will not legally challenge Choudhury. By putting the information in the public domain, **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."

Nine yoga institutions in India helped with the documentation. "The data will be online in the two months. 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."

TKDL will have photos and expla-

nation of the postures. **Dr Gupta** said, "A voice-over will point out which text mentions the posture. The information will be available in several languages. We have screened through several ancient books like Srimad Bhagwat Gita, Vyas Bhashya, Yogasava Vijana, Hatha Praditika, Gheranda Samhita, Shiva Samhita, Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and Sandra Satkarma to exactly document all known 'asanas' and yoga references."

Till now, it is estimated that the US patent office alone has issued over 200 yoga-related copyrights. Experts say yoga has become a \$225 billion market in the West.

Americans supposedly spend about \$3 billion a year on yoga classes. Yoga is a favourite among Hollywood stars. Oprah Winfrey swears by it and so do Madonna, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jennifer Aniston, Cameron Diaz, Gwyneth Paltrow, Jane Fonda, Tina Turner, and Angelina Jolie.