

India pulls the plug on yoga as business

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

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

In order to stop self-styled yoga gurus from claiming copyright on ancient "asanas", like Bikram Choudhury's "Hot Yoga" — a set of 26 sequences practised in a heated room — India has completed documenting 1,300 "asanas", 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 featuring an expert.

According to the **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and Union health ministry's depart-



Bikram Choudhury

ment 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 an 'asana'."

CSIR's V P Gupta, who created **TKDL**, told TOI: "All the 26 sequences, part of 'Hot Yoga', have been mentioned in Indian yoga books written thousands of years ago. However, we will not legally challenge Choudhury." At present, anybody teaching "Hot Yoga" has to pay Choudhury franchisee fee because he holds copyright on them.

Nine well-known yoga institutions in India have helped with the documentation. **TKDL** will have photos and explanation of the postures. **Gupta** says, "A voice-over will also point out which text mentions the posture."