

Govt bid to prevent asana patent claims

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: 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 '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.

According to the **CSIR** and 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'." **P9**

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Centre to tackle patents on yoga 'asanas'

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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 'asanas' which will soon be uploaded on the country's **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, making them public knowledge.

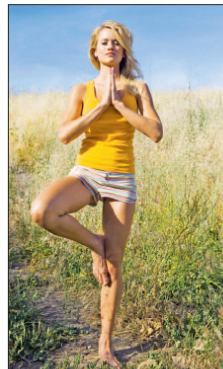
Around 250 of these 'asanas' have also been made into video clips with an expert performing them.

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

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. Everytime, somebody applies for a patent on yoga, the office can check which ancient Indian book first mentioned it and cancel the application."

Nine well known yoga institutions in India have helped



All the 26 sequences, which are part of Bikram Choudhury's Hot Yoga, have been mentioned in Indian yoga books written thousands of years ago, says **CSIR's Dr V P Gupta**.

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.

Till now, it is estimated that the US patent office alone has issued over 200 yoga-related copyrights. Experts say yoga has become a \$25 billion market in the West. Americans supposedly spend about \$3 billion a year on yoga classes.