

Sandeep Bodhanker vows with his Kuchipudi

A spellbinding Kuchipudi performance by Sandeep Bodhanker, who also holds a bachelor's degree in business administration, became the first programme to be hosted at the Nehru Centre in 2006.

Bodhanker, a gifted artist with an infinite passion for performing and imparting the rich tradition of Kuchipudi, held the audience in a spell as he performed various pieces praising the Divine, including Lord Krishna, Lakshmi, Kali and Vishnu, as well as Tarang movements that included dancing on a one square foot stool, the rim of a saucer and the rim of a plate.

This system had been introduced in Kuchipudi tradition by Pandit Laxminarayan Sharma in early 20th century. This was the first time that Tarang had been attempted on a polished and waxed stage at the Nehru Centre.

Bodhanker, who began studying dance at age four and trained under many renowned gurus, including Vedantam Satyanarayana Sharma, Vedantam Radheshyam, Mahankali Mohan and Yeleswarapu Venkateswarlu, is a postgraduate in Kuchipudi Nrityam and a graduate in Bharatanatyam, besides a holder of Diploma in Acting from the Department of Culture, Andhra Pradesh.

He has been honoured by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) for five years consecutively and holds the titles of Natyamayuri, Nrithyasri, Nrithyabhusan and Nrityashekhara.



India's biotech industry on Europe's radar

Life sciences and biotechnology industry are seen as the next big thing in India's economic firmament.

"India has tremendous potential for global sourcing in the life sciences. We are starting with an R&D project in tuberculosis, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Sciences in Bangalore," said Staf Van Reet, managing director of the Belgian company Viziphar Biosciences, while speaking at a seminar on the challenges and opportunities in biotechnology in India on January 11.

Dr. Van Reet also cited the example of the Janssen Stability Centre, which he set up in Mumbai in 1999, when he was managing director of Janssen Pharmaceutica, now a part of Johnson and Johnson.

The aim, he said, "is to turn the centre into a 150-seat centre of excellence, with an investment of up to \$18 million."

Another speaker, Prof. Marc van Montagu, who heads the Institute for Plant Biotechnology for Developing Countries in Belgium's Ghent University and is a pioneer in plant biotechnology, stressed on innovation. "India needs to boost the culture of innovation, to move from an outsourcing service industry to an innovative R&D-based industry."

India's biotech industry is largely centered on the pharmaceutical industry, with the biopharma sector accounting for 75 percent of the industry's total revenue, as against just seven percent for the bioagri sector.

Jayant Nadiger, head of Belgium's Flanders region's Trade and Investment office in Bangalore, noted that the Indian biotech industry was growing rapidly, driven by "the strong networking partnership between large pharmaceutical firms and biotechnology firms".

Indian consumption of biotech products was "expected to quadruple in the next decade", he told the seminar organised by the Belgo-Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A trade mission from the Wallonia region of Belgium will be visiting New Delhi on March 20, the organisers disclosed.

Courtesy: INEP

Britain to focus on curry, cinema to woo Indians

Curry, cinema and cricket have for long linked India and Britain. And tourism authorities will now focus on these to attract the growing Indian middle class traveller.

Having identified India as a key market thanks to high disposable incomes in one of Asia's fastest growing economies, VisitBritain plans to highlight cultural ties and current links to be a strong player.

"Britain is currently number six in the league of outbound visitor's destination," Bernard Donoghue, head of public affairs at VisitBritain, says referring to India.

"But we think that there is much more scope to exploit that market, not least because by 2050 India will be world's third largest economy behind China and the US," says Mr. Donoghue.

According to the official, focussing on cultural ties would be an important element in the agency's strategic planning for increasing the number of visitors from India in the years ahead.

"The number one British dish is curry. In this country, we have got over 8,500 curry restaurants. Cricket is another shared link," says Mr. Donoghue.

"Cinema, in terms of Bollywood, has great potential to encourage Indian travellers to visit Britain since many films are shot in the picturesque locales of this country," he adds.

VisitBritain has also identified Indian call

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centre professionals, who process the back office jobs for many British firms like Lloyds TSB and Norwich Union, as a key element to boost business tourism.

"We have seen a number of companies bringing their staff to Britain to get to know the local culture and understand the nuances of the language. So, outsourcing is resulting in some business tourism from India to Britain."

Crash courses in British culture and accent training are common, and VisitBritain could tap into this market by offering familiarisation trips to Britain for Indian workers, says the official.

In 2004, the 255,000 Indian visitors to Britain spent in a region of 240 million pounds in the country compared to 131 million pounds by the Chinese.

There are about 225 million middle class households in India. In terms of travel potential, that's absolutely enormous, say industry experts.

The number of Indian visitors to Britain has increased 28 percent between 2003 and 2004, and by 39 percent in total since 1999.

Britain's 74-billion pound tourism industry is also hoping that the country would see enhanced interest from Indian travellers in the run up to the Olympic Games in 2012. "We expect a lot of Indian visitors to visit Britain in the run up to the Olympics," he says.

According to the VisitBritain official, the growth in the number of Indian tourists to Britain was expected to rise significantly until 2012. "As per VisitBritain's projections, 80 flights will operate between India and Britain by 2006, up from some 50 now."

Indian hospital on recruitment drive in Britain

For the first time, an India-based hospital has launched a recruitment drive in Britain to hire doctors who can interact and treat British patients who are flocking to India for fast and cheap treatment.

Some companies have been doing brisk business for the past few years arranging the medical treatment of British patients in India by offering a single-window facility — by which the patients are taken care of right from their travel from Britain to India and back after treatment and recovery.

According to the Birmingham-based *Sunday Mercury*, the Kolkata-based private AMRI (Advanced Medicare and Research Institute) Hospital has enlisted the help of a Midlands-based doctor "to tempt British-trained medics to move to India."

The newspaper quoted a former consultant with the National Health Service (NHS), Dilip Roy, from Stourbridge, as saying that he had already helped a young doctor from Leeds to get a job with AMRI.

An advertisement in the *British Medical Journal* next month is also expected to attract more applicants.

Mr. Roy, a freelance orthopaedic surgeon, told the paper: "I was approached by AMRI while I was visiting my



Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi

mother in Kolkata. They wanted me to head a recruitment drive in Britain to attract young doctors to go and work in India.

"It's a two-way thing. India can benefit from having doctors with experience in dealing with Europeans while the doctors benefit from working in a challenging new environment.

"It's quite ironic how things have turned full circle in the last 40 years or so. In those days Indian doctors were literally flooding the country to staff a severely undermanned NHS.

"Now India is trying to woo them all back as well as attract European-born staff."

Mr. Roy said AMRI Hospital was prepared to pay for interested doctors to fly out to India and spend a few weeks working in the plush hospital in the heart of Kolkata.

"They will get full hands-on experience and will even be invited to carry out basic surgery," he said. "The pay by Indian standards is very good but the incentive to work here isn't really financial.

"It's more a case of getting job satisfaction as we have so many patients."

Reports say that about one million people in Britain are currently on NHS waiting lists. Queues can mean a wait of up to 10 months for a hip replacement and six months for heart surgery.

Undergoing the same treatment in India costs a British patient a fraction of the cost of having it in the private sector in Britain.