

Carving a niche

Kathak dancer Rajkumar Bhatti is a sought after teacher in the city

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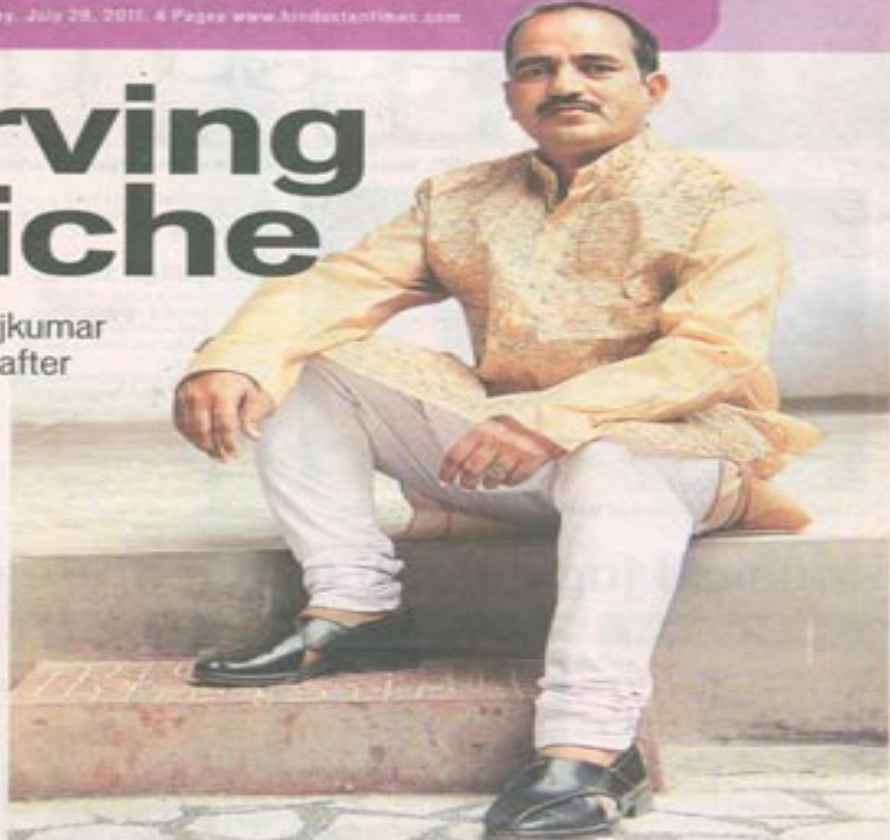
Rajkumar Bhatti, 40, has carved a niche in the world of Kathak dance by sheer dint of hard work and commitment to the art. As a result, he is one of the most sought Kathak teachers in the millennium city.

Living in Gurgaon for the past 15 years, he is going to perform solo at Jaipur in the first week of September. Some of his disciples will also perform at the event. Bhatti was born and brought up in a family, which has a long list of Kathak dancers of the Jaipur Gharana who have contributed a lot to this art in Rajasthan and elsewhere.

Bhatti started learning Kathak at the age of four from the legend of Jaipur Gharana, Pandit Sohan Lal Parwar, who was a disciple of the founder of Jaipur Gharana Pandit Mahuraj Jaisi.

"I got all basic education in Kathak from him," said the dancer who has done BA in dance, a five-year senior diploma in vocal and five-year senior diploma in tabla, all from Prayag Sangeet Samit, affiliated to Allahabad University.

Staff writer Dhananjay Jha



Bhatti started learning Kathak at the age of four. MANALI KUMARI/HT PHOTO

born his early days when he used to devote hours to learning Kathak at home. By the age of 15 years, he had learnt enough to perform at Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur, along with his father and brother in 1985.

Presently Bhatti is teaching Kathak at SOA, Bhubaneswar.

Sector 15-II and also taking private classes.

Never keen on publicity, Bhatti does not remember many of his performances. But he is happy that his students have been doing well and have held shows at Triveni Kala Sangam and

SOLO PERFORMANCES

- Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur, 2004
- Jawahar Lal Nehru auditorium, Pune, 2010
- District auditorium, Ahmad Nagar, Maharashtra, 2010

QUEST

A SCHOOLS' INITIATIVE FROM THE INDIAN EXPRESS

laugh, no matter what region we belong to. The sooner we realise how alike we really are, the better.

■ **POOJA GAUTAM, XII-A**
Rahnjas School, Pusa Road

IN my view, there should be exchange programmes between states to enhance their educational experience as well as effect national integration. Such a programme would help strengthen the network between students, broaden their personal and educational perspectives, help them explore and appreciate different cultures, and eliminate fear and prejudice. Exchange programmes can also help people communicate with others effectively and create strong bonds between them.

■ **SHIVANI RAWAT, IX-C**
Salwan Public School, Gurgaon

ACCORDING to me, there should be exchange programmes between schools from various states. It will provide teachers as well as students with an opportunity to understand how schools in other states — with different cultural backgrounds — function. As India is a vast country with diverse cultures, it is of great importance to develop a sense of re-

spect for people from other states. Besides inculcating the spirit of tolerance and brotherhood in students, it will also promote national integration. Moreover, students and teachers will learn about good practices that are being followed by other schools in the fields of academic and extracurricular activities. This can also help improve the teaching methodology of schools in India, and produce responsible students who are capable of turning our nation into a world leader.

■ **ANURAG CHOUDHARY, IX-C**
Salwan Public School, Gurgaon

INDIA is a country that has diverse cultures, religions and people. It's a pity we — being Indians — haven't done enough to know the people of our own country. Inter-state student exchange programmes can help children understand the different cultures and traditions that exist in our country. Also, it will expand our knowledge about places, languages and people. Trying out new things is an essential part of any student's life. Schools in different states may have different boards. The methodology of classroom teaching is also different everywhere. We can get to know the way the teachers teach, and how classroom interactions take place, in other states. Besides, we will be able to make new — more different — friends. What more can one ask for?

■ **KANIKA SANDAL, X-A**
Salwan Public School, Gurgaon

I AM all for inter-state exchange

programmes between schools. If something like that is done, students will get an opportunity to learn about each other's history, customs, habits and culture. Face-to-face interactions will remove whatever wrong perceptions one has, and lead to a healthy, constructive environment. Moreover, programmes like these can help the students adjust to their new surroundings when they leave for higher studies in a different state or country. Such programmes result in over-round development of students through healthy bonding between students from different environs, and filling up of the gap between varied races, cultures and religions. Schools across India must encourage such programmes in the greater interests of education, and the nation as a whole.

■ **TANYA GUPTA, IX-A**
Salwan Public School, Gurgaon

INDIA is a large country with a population accounting to about 1.21 billion. With such a huge population, isn't it necessary for us to understand each other's cultures and lives better — so we can build a nation that can compete with any power in the world? Inter-state exchange programmes are important for us, as a nation, to understand our identity. A student living in Delhi may not know much about Mumbai, its streets, its tourist spots and lifestyle. Such programmes can promote harmony and brotherhood among the people of India, and — more importantly — inculcate a feeling of unity among them.

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Poet's Junction

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Racial discrimination is seen in every country,
Does not matter if it is India or Germany.
We can't do much,
Or else there will be a dreadful fight.
If we go to Europe and see the sight,
The Indians are left behind and
Europeans have the might.
Nothing is seen except your colour,
Neither your heart nor your mind.
When God made us,
He never thought, that
humans will do things of this sort,
Let the peace be there,
And God will get a world exactly
As he thought of one.

**Ananya Gupta (VI-D) Salwan Public
School, Gurgaon**