

Regional culinary talent shines at NYCC East

IHM Kolkata and IHM Bhubaneswar advance to Grand Finale in New Delhi

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India's rich culinary heritage took centre stage at the East Zone round of the National Young Chef Competition (NYCC), organized by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in partnership with the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA); Ministry of Tourism and Tourism & Hospitality Skill Council (THSC). The competition was held on 18th September 2025 at the Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Kolkata with enthusiastic participation from leading hospitality institutes across the eastern region.

Spread over six months, the contest is travelling across the country through zonal rounds before culminating in a grand finale in New Delhi in January 2026. After the successful North Zone round held in Chandigarh, the spotlight shifted to Kolkata where 11 institutes competed in a live cook-off showcasing innovation rooted in Indian traditions.



Following an intense contest, IHM Kolkata and IHM Bhubaneswar emerged victorious and will represent the East Zone at the Grand Finale. The ICFAI University, Sikkim was declared runner-up.

In its maiden edition, NYCC is open exclusively to final-year hospitality students across government, private, stand-alone institutions and university departments specializing in hospitality and hotel management. The initiative is designed to create a focused platform on Indian cuisine, highlighting its depth, diversity and techniques while connecting aspiring chefs with the industry for internships and career opportunities.

The participating institutes in the East Zone round included Gurunanak Institute of Hotel Management,

Kolkata; The ICFAI University, Sikkim; Institute of Hotel and Restaurant Management, Kolkata; IHM, Bhubaneswar; IHM, Kolkata; JIS University, Kolkata; Medhavi Skill University, Sikkim; NIPS Bhubaneswar; NIPS Kolkata; NIPS Ranchi; State Institute of Hotel Management, Durgapur.

Each participating team prepared a three-course Indian meal comprising starter, main course and dessert within two and a half hours. The contest challenged participants to reinterpret traditional flavours using modern culinary practices, in front of an eminent jury, mentors and an eager audience.

The jury for the East Zone round was chaired by Chef Anil Grover, Certified WorldChefs Judge and included Chef Abhiru Biswas, President, Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA); Chef Sandeep Kumar Pandey, General Secretary, EICA; Chef Kavitha Unni, Executive Sous Chef, Taj Bengal Kolkata; and Chef Debjee Majumdar, Co-Founder, Passion for Hospitality.

Sharing his thoughts on the competition, Chef Manjit Gill, President, IFCA, remarked, “India’s culinary traditions are vast and unique and it is heartening to see young chefs engaging with this heritage in fresh and innovative ways. The East Zone showcased exceptional creativity that reflects the future of our culinary landscape.”

Ms. Shalini S Sharma, Assistant Secretary General, PHDCCI, added, “With NYCC, our vision is not only to identify talent, but also to create a movement where education, industry and youth converge. The East Zone round at Kolkata reflects the strength of collaboration and the passion of students in preserving Indian gastronomy.”

The event was supported by zonal partner – Lee Kum Kee and national partners – TATA Consumer Products, Nestle Professional, Cremica Food Industries, Venus Industries, Hospitality & Kitchen Solutions (HAKS), Wagh Bakri Tea Group, Welbilt India (Merrychef & Convothem), McCain Foods, Chefs Unlimited, Eastern India Culinary Association (EICA), Purchasing Professional Forum – India (PPFI) and Hospitality Purchasing Managers Forum (HPMF).

For more information, visit:

<https://phdcccitourismhospitality.in/upcoming-events/phdcci-national-chef-competition/>

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