

launchpad

Inko Centre gives Korean pop music the attention it deserves, with a special academy and a month-long programme



K-POP'S TAKEOVER



OR a city with an increasing Korean population (4,000 and counting), Chennai's engagement with Korean culture has now grown beyond taekwondo and *bibimbap*. It now includes K-pop, too. And riding this wave of popularity — the Koreans call it *hallyu* or the Korean wave — is Inko Centre, which is launching an academy to polish the dancing and vocal skills of K-pop enthusiasts. "The academy is in response to the growing popularity of K-pop in the city, with people showing interest to learn it first-hand" says Rathu Jafer, director of Inko Centre.

City centre

The annual K-pop contest, which was launched in New Delhi in 2012, expanded to the city in 2014, and saw 45 participants that year. In the following edition, the number rose to 50. For this year's edition, to start next week, Chennai is poised to host, for the first time, the country's final round. And it doesn't



from the Sejong University in Korea. "The idea is to create a crew of professionally-trained performers at the end of the course, who can perform the opening acts at the upcoming semi-finals and finals of the K-pop contest," Jafer states.

The course on vocals will impart the basics of vocalisation, diction and breathing techniques, says 37-year-old Dong Sik Kim, who has 15 years of experience in vocal training. Boy band SHINee's *View*, *Alinny*s by Yoo Mi-Rae — a rapper of American and Korean descent — and star vocalist Gummy's popular ballad, *You Are My Everything*, are some of the songs the students will be trained to sing, he says.

Jung Jiwon, a 37-year-old dance instructor and choreographer, who will train the students in movement, says the course will train participants in the basics, teaching them the vocabulary of dance for K-pop, attitude and body language, besides imparting lessons in body alignment and body isolation.

stop there. "There is also a vibrant online community in South India, well-versed in K-pop, which meets on a quarterly basis at the Inko Centre," she adds. Around 60 enthusiasts from the city participate in every meet, with the demographic usually within the age group of 18-35.

Camp time

At the K-pop Academy, participants will be trained for two weeks, in vocal and movement, with experts being flown in

Open for up to 30 participants, from April 25 to May 20, at Inko Centre. Register for free. Details: 26361224

— Sharadha Narayanan



K-POP contest is here again!

The K-POP contest 2016, which gives fans the chance to show their dancing and singing skills to Korean Music has been announced last month

It is the time of year eagerly awaited by K-POP fans in the city! The Korean Cultural Centre India (KCCI) had announced 'K-POP Contest 2016' last month, generating a lot of excitement with the many K-POP fans in India. Now, they have announced the regions for the preliminary rounds. Online video submissions for the contest began on April 15, and will continue until May 25.

After the participants are shortlisted from online entries, they are called to specific regions to compete. After that, the winners of each region will compete against each other in the grand finale, which will be held in Chennai this year. From the time that India started participating in the K-POP Contest, the finals have always been held in Delhi.

This shift in venue to Chennai is a surprise for



Pictures from previous year's contest

the fans, but for those fans that have been asking for a change, this is happy news!

KCCI, which has been working for the promotion of Korean Culture, is bringing K-POP closer to other parts of the country as well letting them experience the excitement and

joy of meeting their favourite K-POP idols! Winners at the grand finale will then represent India at the 'K-POP World Festival' in Changwon, South Korea.

The K-POP contest is part of the K-POP World Festival that is held every year in

Changwon, South Korea, and is organised by South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs along with the support of many other organisations. It is a festival bringing in K-POP lovers from all over the world to showcase their love for K-POP through dancing or singing.

