

Indo-Chinese eatery marks UK-India Year of Culture

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One of London's first-of-its-kind Indo-Chinese restaurants is marking the 'UK-India Year of Culture' with its own first-year anniversary celebration.

Hakkaland was set up by Indian-Chinese chef Steven Lee to bring the distinct flavour of Chinese food from his birthplace of Kolkata alive in the UK.

"This fusion cuisine represents Indian food at its best and symbolises the UK India Year of Culture with its successful one year in business," said Lee.

"This country is full of multi-cultural diversity and we want to offer something different. We want them to feel at home away from home," he said.

Lee, who trained under top Indo-Chinese chefs during his time in India, has cooked for celebrities and some of India's elites, including actor Amitabh Bachchan and business magnate Anil Ambani.

He mastered the art of the unique Indian influence on Chinese cuisine at Mumbai's China Garden restaurant before an invitation to work with UK-based celebrity chef Udit Sakhel brought him to Britain many years ago.

Lee is planning to turn Hakkaland into a chain of Indo- Chinese restaurants across the UK.

"The plans are big and if we get the same support as we have now received, then I promise Hakkaland will be at the top of the fusion restaurant list," said Lee, who specialises in adapting Chinese cooking techniques to Indian flavours and tastes using the classic Chinese wok.

Some of his signature dishes reflect their roots in West Bengal such as Kolkata Chilli Chicken and include a variety of typically Indian-style vegetarian Chinese dishes.

Lee's vision is to bring China Town, or Tangra area, of Kolkata alive in the UK along with the food of his ancestors from the Hakka region of China.