

Dutch singer to rock with Hanuman Chalisa

Godhooli Sharma | TNN

Lucknow: Ever heard the rock music version of Hanuman Chalisa? Raj Mohan, a Dutch singer and songwriter who sings in Bhojpuri, is all set to release Hanuman Chalisa in rock music style along with his disciple and rapper Manav D.

A fifth generation Indian in Suriname, Mohan was raised in Utrecht, Netherlands, and displayed musical talent at an early age.

Mohan, who is in the city to attend the Global Investors Summit, told TOI that the new version will be streamed on an online platform and cost \$1 to the listener. The mo-



Dutch singer Raj Mohan

ney earned from the show will be invested in setting up a factory in Uttar Pradesh that will produce 'green batteries'.

"The rock version of Hanuman Chalisa has already

been recorded and will go live on Hanuman Jayanti in April this year. I have sung chaupais and dohas while my disciple has a rap recorded in between. We have rock music recorded in the background. The revenue earned will be invested in UP to fulfil the dream of my forefathers of contributing to the development of the country," Mohan said.

"Similar factories will be later set up in Dubai, China, Japan, United States of America and the United Kingdom. Our aim is to gradually promote these environment-friendly batteries across the world," he added.

The project is sponsored

by the Quality Service Con-

tent Human Capital Foundation Limited (QSC-HC). Mohan invented the Sarnami-Bhojpuri Geet in the Geet & Ghazal style which was appreciated worldwide with his album 'Kantráki' (2005). His ancestors were taken to Suriname from Basti in UP as indentured labourers by the British.

"As a kid I used to watch Bhojpuri movies and listen to the Baithak gana - a form of music originating in Suriname by the Indian community where Dholak, Dandtaal and harmonium are used in a sync. I continued with my passion with music even after moving to the Netherlands and listened to records of gha-

zal singers like Mehdi Hassan, Jagjit Singh and Begum Akhtar," Mohan said.

Mohan learned music from Ustad Jamaluddin Bhartiya in Amsterdam to become a ghazal singer.

The idea to sing the Sarnami-Bhojpuri Geet occurred to Mohan in the 1990s. Sarnami Bhojpuri is a mix of several Hindustani dialects and the languages spoken by the Indians in the country they immigrated to.

"Initially, when I told people that I wanted to sing in Sarnami Bhojpuri, they laughed at me but my album 'Kantraki' in 2005 changed everything. It was recorded in Varanasi," Mohan said.