



Daal bhat arancini stuffed with nak cheese and herbal lemon tea

History on a plate



From left: The special platter that won the award; From left to right: Chef Soundararajan P (president), Chef Abhijit Saha (coach), Chef Ranjit Debnath (candidate), and Chef Aheer Biswas (commis)

Express Features

We have created history,” says Chef P Soundararajan talking about team India winning the ‘Special plate prize’, at the recently concluded Bocuse d’Or Asia Pacific 2018, popularly known as Chef Olympics. “For the first time, a team from India has won the award and it’s a very prestigious moment,” says the general secretary of Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA).

The four-member team — Soundararajan P, Ranjit Debnath, Abhijit Saha and Aheer Biswas — outshined other nations in the special platter round. “Before the competition, we announced a national selection across the country. The best chefs from the country took part in it and we short-listed the participants. Abhijit trained

the candidates... the dishes that had to be made on the day of the competition were practiced close to 30 times,” shares Soundararajan, whose team competed against 12 countries including Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and New Zealand.

The main aim of such competitions, he says, is for chefs to learn and improve their culinary skills. “Winning here shows that we are on par with other countries. But, we need to evolve. All our dishes were made with

international ingredients, but had an Indian twist to it,” shares the chef.

The winning entry was prepared by Ranjit and was inspired by India’s national bird – peacock. “The presentation was one of the most important criteria in this competition and the dish successfully exemplified the elegance of the national bird,” he explains. It was served in sterling silver and the special plate included a kale and salame milano rolled veal loin, veal tortellini a la samosa, ricotta stuffed morel, truffle oil-infused red wine jus and cherry glazed foie gras parfait. “We were preparing for the competition almost a year in advance. We have already started preparing for the finals,” he says.

Team India will be headed by Ranjit Debnath at the Grand Finale of Bocuse d’Or to be held in France in January 2019.

