

Go for some music in the evening. Catch Alaknanda Institute For Performing Arts present a musical concert — ALLEGROS.

At: Epicentre; On: July 16; Time: 7.30 pm



making a difference

ASHOK PRADHAN

In these times of recession, here's a young dreamer, who aspires to make at least one thousand small-town Indians meet their dream jobs, annually. Nishant Saxena, an Allahabad-bred IIM-Lucknow alumnus has initiated a holistic education programme that aims to make India's Tier-II city youth employable. "Our vision is to fill up the major skills gap between graduating Indian students and their inspirational service-sector jobs," he says.

Along with 10 fellow IIM alumni, Saxena has been running an institute, Elements Akademia (EA), in Sushant Lok since 2007 to address the needs of students from smaller cities. "The idea (to set up such an institute) was born overnight. I shared it with some of my friends, who immediately offered to back the project. We have only grown since," says this young CEO. "The focus of the institute is to impart training to students from non-metros and help them get placed in its partner companies and beyond," says Saxena.

Being someone who hails from a small town, Saxena claims to

share a special bonding with students from similar backgrounds. "They have the talent, they just need grooming tips to compete at the global level," he says.

And this, feels Saxena cannot be done at a macro level. At his institute, to ensure that each of the participant gets personalised attention, the batches have been restricted to 12-20 students.

Saxena's vision is to fill up the skills gap between graduates and service-sector jobs

But, what makes attending these classes attractive to the students is the institute's tie-ups with the various BPOs, Banks, and Retail chains, that offer easy placements. The format, of the courses offered, according to Saxena, is very simple and focuses more on filling common gaps across industries.

"I always had a passion for education. That helped me design EA's flagship course—the Executive Program in Services Management to provide highly

skilled manpower," says Saxena.

EA offers its courses in branded finishing schools in Tier II cities as well as through a part-time finishing course delivered via strategic partnerships.

And Saxena should know. For someone, who started his career with Proctor & Gamble — he worked with the corporate for eight years at different geographies of Asia-Pacific region, including Philippines, Japan, India and Singapore — Saxena has gathered impressive experience in Strategic Planning, M&A, and Corporate Finance. His love for teaching made him take up assignments as guest faculty with institutes like IIM, Lucknow and SP Jain, Dubai.

And he has no plans to stop at that. Ambitious in his planning, Saxena wants to take EA to another level. Saxena and his partners EA are forging alliances with MBA colleges and universities in the cities where it has retail centers. They are also on a lookout to form corporate partnerships across more functional areas and sectors for better placement opportunities for its students. By 2012 EA has concrete plans to have 13 centres in India. That's a good number!