

Ambassador's remarks at International Day of Yoga 2022
The Atrium, 19 June 2022

Excellencies, friends and colleagues,

Namaste, Goedemorgen, Good morning to all!

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the celebration of 8th International Day of Yoga in the beautiful city of The Hague.

2. It has been eight years since Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi made the proposal to celebrate 21st June as the International Day of Yoga in the United Nations General Assembly. Since then, Yoga has been adopted by over a billion people across 180 countries. Today, IDY is the most popular and the most celebrated international day declared by the United Nations.

3. Yoga which originated in India 5000 years ago and has been embraced by all, becoming our common heritage. Yoga is a perfect blend of Gyaan (knowledge), Karm (action) and Bhakti (devotion). It represents the unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature and a holistic approach to health and well-being. Its health and spiritual benefits are well recognized by modern science.

4. To quote Prime Minister Modi, *“Yoga is not just a set of exercises that keep the body fit, it is a health insurance in zero-budget. It is also ideal for relaxation of mind and body. It gives peace of mind. And people who are at peace with themselves are at peace with others..”*

5. The pandemic has made us all realize the critical importance of remaining fit and boosting one's natural immunity. Yoga has proved to be a great medium in ensuring the same. During peak of the pandemic, Yoga was a source of strength and poise and helped people to muster confidence to fight with the pandemic world over. In a world beset by various challenges, the practice of Yoga has a role to play as enhancer of physical, mental, spiritual and intellectual well-being.

6. More importantly, yoga promotes the universal message of peace. Yoga brings people together through compassion, kindness and fosters a sense of unity and builds resilience among people world over. It is

for these intrinsic values embedded in Yoga that the theme for IDY2022 is Yoga For Humanity.

7. The popularity of yoga has seen a significant increase in the Netherlands. There are more than 150 yoga schools in Netherlands. Many of them have joined us today and I take this opportunity to commend them for their efforts. It is also heartening to know that Yoga is an essential part of curriculum of the armed forces of Netherlands and we are very happy that many of the officers have joined us today. In run-up to today's event, young students across universities in Netherlands have held yoga day in their respective campuses.

8. This year is very special for India as we are commemorating 75 years of India's independence. For the first time, Guardian Ring For Yoga will showcase IDY celebrations in 75 countries from east to west, with the movement of the sun. This year also marks 75th anniversary of our strong friendship with Netherlands. I am grateful to our esteemed colleagues from the Government of Netherlands who have joined us today.

9. We are proud to be hosting this event at the Atrium, in the heart of the city. In this endeavor, we have received invaluable support from our sponsor/partner organizations, yoga studios and concerned agencies of the Netherlands Government. I wish to place on record our thanks to them. My special thanks to my team at the Embassy and the Yoga teacher and students of Gandhi Cultural Centre for leading the yoga session, who have worked tirelessly to make this event a success.

10. The beauty of Yoga lies in its simplicity. All it requires is sometime and a little space. I hope all of us can devote ourselves to the discipline of yoga and make it an integral part of our daily lives.

11. Let me conclude by thanking all you for joining us. I hope you enjoy an energizing morning of yoga.

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Dank u well!
