

**Over 3000 persons gather in Museumplein, Amsterdam to mark International Yoga Day; one day wellness festival concludes with Soul Shanti Concert by Dr. L. Subramaniam and Kavita Krishnamurthy**

A large gathering of around 3000 people participated in a whole day wellness festival organized by the Embassy of India on Sunday, June 17 at the prestigious Museumplein, Amsterdam to mark the International Yoga Day.

The event inaugurated by the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Netherlands, Ms. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen; spiritual guru His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar; and Mr. Venu Rajamony, Ambassador of India to the Netherlands was marked by many firsts. It was the first time yoga was being celebrated in Amsterdam, the biggest city and national capital of the Netherlands. It was also the first time such a major Indian event was being held in the prestigious venue of the Museumplein in front of the Rijksmuseum (national museum). It was the largest yoga celebrations to be organized in the Netherlands till date and the first event to witness participation of a Minister of the Dutch government and a leading spiritual guru from India namely Guruji Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. A large number of Dutch and Indian dignitaries as well as Ambassadors of many countries also took part in the celebrations and the mass yoga demonstrations.

The morning began with a group session of traditional Indian yoga, followed by a talk and meditation session led by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. A dhol performance by Marathi Mandal; a yoga workshop conducted by the well-known Dutch yoga teacher Johan Noorloos of The New Yoga School, Amsterdam; a special session of yoga for children and families by Patty Jogenmaets of Dolfijn Wellness Amsterdam; a session of anahata yoga accompanied by music by Manish Pole and Neetu Singh of the Total Yoga School, Bengaluru, a sitar and tabla performance by Sabir Khan and Heiko Dijker as well as dance performance by Natya Sudha group of the Netherlands were some of the highlights of the day. Further separate “Yoga Hut” featured seven different schools of yoga and competitions in sun salutation, “hold a pose” challenge, laughter yoga, yoga for office etc.

Stalls providing advice on yoga, wellness and healthy living as well as food trucks with vegetarian and vegan food catered to the visitors. The menu was diverse ranging from Indian pani puri and vada pav to veggie burgers and the traditional

Dutch poffertjes. A special stall of the Tea Board of India provided an opportunity to taste different Indian teas while leading Dutch super market chain SPAR set up a children's nutrition zone and provided free energy drinks.

The grand finale was a performance titled "The Soul Shanti Concert," by violin maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam and Bollywood playback singer Kavita Krishnamurthy which enthralled and captivated a large audience of around 1500 people who sat on the lawns of the Museumplein. The concert was a perfect culmination to the whole day of festivities promoting wellness, healthy eating, yoga and meditation.

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