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Building a Better Society



Workout fads come and go, but virtually no other exercise programme is as enduring as yoga. It has been around for 5,000 years and has a long-standing fan following including celebrities like Jennifer Aniston, Lady Gaga and Richard Gere amongst many others. To mobilize the **International Yoga Day (IYD)** initiative in the UAE, the **Consulate General of India, Dubai**, has taken a lead in hosting the IYD celebration. Joining in hands is Gaurav Grover, President NDSWA (New Delhi Social Workers Association) and MD, Miracle Solutions. He speaks to Yasmeen Maqbool on plans to promote it as a community event.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY

I have been associated with NDSWA (New Delhi Social Workers Association) as President and MD of Miracle Solutions, where we are dedicated to building a better society. We have been involved in inclusive tasks of Social Development such as Women Empowerment, Hygiene & Healthcare, Adult Literacy, Communal Harmony etc. The journey of NDSWA started in 1948 with the aim of nation building, while collaborating with the Government of India to give solid foundations to a newly formed country. It eventually grew as a strong force for social and cultural growth of the society. In the present scenario, with the help of my wife Palka, we strive to look for newer areas in which we can contribute to the society. International Yoga Day in Dubai is one such endeavour.

WHY YOGA?

Yoga is a way of life. The core tenet of yoga relies on self-building through different asanas to relax and rejuvenate; mind, body and soul. Sages developed this ancient practice as a physical and spiritual discipline that later grew into a philosophy to lead a healthy and sound life. The journey of a healthy nation begins with its healthy citizens. "Yoga is a great tool to nation-building," says Baba Ramdev. He believes that a healthy person will eventually be able to contribute to nation building. It could be a healthy sign for 'Make in India' campaign as well which will rely heavily on a healthy workforce.

ARE THERE ANY PERSONAL BENEFITS THAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED WITH PRACTICING YOGA?

By practicing yoga since last year, I have seen a drastic positive change in my life. I see myself as a healthier and more productive person. I wake up every morning and start with 'Surya Namaskaar' that fills me with positive energy and then I practice different kriyas, asanas and chant mantras that rejuvenate my senses. I have been able to put all this positive energy into my work. By constant practice of Yoga, I have realised that it brings certain calmness to your state of mind. You are able to make people happier around you, be it, family friends or colleagues.

WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION WITH YOGA?

My connection with Yoga is a Spiritual one. I feel it enlightens me and takes me to a higher mental and physical state where I am at peace and view the world in a comprehensive manner. After such realisation, you are able to understand the world in a better way and strive to contribute to the society. It gives me great pride that I am a part of the International Yoga Day in Dubai, where many new people will experience the beauty of yoga.

WHY DUBAI?

Dubai is a city of innovations. It is a city that

never sleeps. Dubai is a pioneer in the field of architecture, technology and economics. Everyone wants to experience Dubai, at least once in his or her lifetime. Such is the charm of this city. It is a cosmopolitan city with people of more than 200 nationalities. This city is a trend-setter.

Promoting yoga here has its own advantages. The world looks at Dubai with awe. Last year, on International Yoga Day, the Al Wasl Stadium was filled with approximately 18,000 yoga enthusiasts from over 60+ nationalities from around the world. This year, we want to raise the bar. If more people here start practicing yoga, then it will only add to its productivity and charisma. Why slow it down?

TELL US ABOUT THE EVENT?

To mobilize this initiative in UAE, We, along with the Consulate General of India, Dubai are organising the International Yoga Day to promote this as a community event. The motto of this year is 'HEALTH - HARMONY - HAPPINESS'.

The event will start from 8 pm onwards, on Saturday, 18th June, 2016, at Dubai World Trade Centre (Halls 1 to 4, Sheikh Saeed Hall 1,2,3 including Trade Centre Arena). We are expecting a gathering of more than 20,000 people. The event is open to individuals, schools, local universities, diplomatic community and all of the Emirates. We are also vigorously creating a buzz all around the globe through various forms of media. A dedicated app has also been created for the same.

ARE YOU HOPING TO COVER MORE THAN JUST THE SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA?

We are promoting this event world over. We are targeting various social and cultural institutions such as schools, universities, cultural centres etc. We are promoting this vigorously on social media and other platforms (TV, Radio, billboards, newsletters, mailers, etc.). We are expecting a gathering of more than 20,000 people.

WHAT IS THE CONSUL GENERAL'S INVOLVEMENT?

HE Anurag Bhushanji, The Consul General of India, Dubai, is playing a pivotal role in bringing this event to reality. The Indian Consulate, Dubai organised the yoga day in 2015 and took the first step in the direction of creating mass awareness in Dubai for yoga. The Consulate's initiative is the fundamental step in making a healthier, happier Dubai with harmonious co-existence of 60+ nationalities. They are reaching out to all the communities - people, administration and businesses to ensure a cohesive yoga day in Dubai. We sincerely hope all Indian consulates will take a cue from this initiative and spread the awareness of the benefits of Yoga in their respective local communities.

ARE YOU LOOKING TO BREAK A WORLD RECORD?

Yes we are expecting to break a world record

of the largest yoga wave with people from maximum nationalities.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE ATTENDEES WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THIS EVENT?

The attendees will learn about the physical, mental and spiritual benefits of yoga. Such a gathering will bring people from different communities together, hence, a great learning on communal harmony. They are going to take home lessons for a good health, harmony and lasting happiness, which is also this year's motto.

ARE WE EXPECTING ANY FAMOUS EXPONENTS OF YOGA?

We are expecting the Yoga Guru, Baba Ramdev to join us.

YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH SAFFRON MEDIA WORKS?

Saffron Media Works is supporting and helping us organise and promote this community event.

WHAT NEXT? THIS WILL BE A HARD ACT TO BEAT.

We are looking forward to organising many such events and raise the bar every year.

WILL THIS BE A ONE-TIME ONLY EVENT, OR ARE THERE SIGN-UP PLANS TO TAKE THE YOGA CONCEPT TO A SUSTAINABLE GROUND LEVEL?

We are looking forward to develop this as a long-term endeavour.

We are also planning something big with Saffron Media Works for the 1st week of October to showcase the Art, Culture, Handicraft, Food etc of India in the UAE.

The United Nations has approved the proposal of Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi to launch a special day for yoga practitioners across the world. The initiative which found support from many global leaders has found a date marked in the UN calendar of annual events, with June 21 being chosen as the 'International Yoga Day'.

More than 170 countries including USA, Canada, China, UAE and KSA have supported this event including 175 nations that co-sponsored this resolution. On December 11, 2014, the 193-member UN General Assembly approved by consensus; a resolution establishing June 21st as 'International Day of Yoga' – a proud moment for Indians.