

Remarks of Ambassador Pavan Kapoor on 7th International Day of Yoga

Your Excellency Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan Minister of Tolerance & Coexistence of the UAE, esteemed representatives of the Indian community and members of the Embassy family present here. As you are aware, the International Day of Yoga is celebrated annually across the world on June 21. Since it is going to be a working day here, we decided to mark it today. It was at India's behest that the UN recognized the importance of Yoga and passed a resolution in 2014 institutionalizing the celebration of International Day of Yoga.

We appreciate the tremendous support we have received from the UAE authorities in organizing this annual event for the past 6 years. After last year's online event due to the pandemic restrictions, we are pleased to be out in the open this year, although in very limited numbers and with full Covid protocols. This has been possible due to the UAE's very successful vaccination drive and we owe special thanks to the UAE leadership for this. We are especially thankful to His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan for his kind and continuous support for gracing our Yoga day events as Chief Guest. His presence here today and wise words will encourage us all to adopt Yoga, which can, as he pointed out, help us work towards a happy, tolerant and peaceful society. I warmly recall, his support on the occasion of Yoga day last year, when due to the pandemic, we were unable to host an event for the public. On that occasion too His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan as well as Her Excellency Noura Al Kaabi Minister of Culture and Youth, shared their inspiring video messages which formed an integral part of the online event organized by the Embassy. Your Excellency Sheikh Nahayan, we are deeply moved by your commitment and regular support to Yoga, to India and for your empathy towards the Indian expatriate community in the UAE. Thank you so much.

The theme of this year's International Day of Yoga 'Yoga for wellness' as you heard Sheikh Nahayan also eloquently put across, is particularly relevant in today's context when people all over the world have gone through and continue to face a lot of physical and mental stress. As our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has said, the theme this year reflects the concern for the good health and well being of people across the globe. It is an endeavour to ensure that we focus on fitness as well as wellness. He further pointed out that Yoga has an inherent power to connect as he said Yoga is good for the community, immunity and for unity. The ancient Indian science of Yoga is well known for its benefits for the physical and mental well being of individuals and at the same time is a sustainable way for ensuring harmony of mankind with nature. The meaning of Yoga was also well explained by our Prime Minister when he said "By practicing Yoga, a spirit of oneness is created – oneness of the body, the mind and the intellect". Amid the ongoing pandemic, as our access to public venues has got restricted, the importance of simple practices of Yoga, meditation and Ayurveda in keeping us fit and healthy has further increased. While these well known sciences of Indian origin have been around for many centuries they are still relevant and useful today as we observe India@75 or 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' marking 75 years of India's independence. We can continue to avail the multiple benefits of Yoga from the comfort of our homes amid the ongoing restrictions of social distancing. You just heard how wonderfully our Chief Guest explained that there is no excuse not to adopt Yoga, not to practice Yoga since there are no restrictions on either place and the benefits are there for all. So this Yoga day, let us commit to make Yoga an integral part of our daily routine to help us and the society fight the ongoing pandemic successfully.

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan and all of you for being here today as part of this journey of Yoga as well as the UAE authorities for supporting us to organize this hybrid event which as His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan said is the start that is showing us that there is light at the end of tunnel. I also urge all of you present here, to follow all Covid-19 related health protocols throughout the duration of the event to ensure the safety of yourself and others.

Thank you once again. Namaste
