

REBUILDING STUDENT TRUST
AFTER THE PAPER LEAK CRISIS

For a generation that has grown up under the relentless pressure of competitive examinations, the recent spate of paper leaks has fractured something fragile: the belief that merit, not manipulation, decides who gets to become a doctor, an engineer or a civil servant.

When lakhs of students who have spent years preparing discover that a result can be bought or stolen, the damage extends beyond one exam cycle. It corrodes faith in the entire system of public examinations.

The pattern across recent controversies is depressingly familiar. Question papers have been printed and transported through poorly secured logistics chains, sometimes via private vendors with minimal accountability. Centres in remote towns have weak digital infrastructure, making real-time monitoring difficult. There is often a troubling gap between when a paper is finalised and when it is administered — a window long enough for leaks to occur and circulate on messaging apps.

Investigations, when they happen, are slow, fragmented across state and central agencies, and rarely result in swift, visible punishment. Most damagingly, the bodies conducting these exams have repeatedly responded with denial rather than transparency, eroding credibility further with every defensive press statement.

Gen Z's fury is not simply about a single exam gone wrong. It reflects a generation that has watched coaching-centre economics balloon, that has poured family savings into preparation, and that increasingly experiences exams as the only ladder of social mobility available to them. When that ladder appears rigged, the betrayal feels personal and systemic at once — amplified and accelerated by social media, which turns local grievances into national outrage within hours.

Rebuilding trust requires structural change, not just reassurance. First, examination bodies must adopt secure, encrypted digital question-delivery systems with decentralised, randomised paper sets, reducing the value of any single leak.

Second, an independent statutory authority — insulated from political and administrative pressure — should oversee high-stakes national exams, with clear accountability separate from the ministries that benefit politically from smooth exam conduct.

Third, the chain of custody for papers, from the printing press to the exam hall, needs forensic-level tracking, audited by external agencies, not self-certified.

Equally important is the speed and visibility of justice. Leak investigations must run on fixed timelines with public reporting, and those responsible — whether vendors, officials or examination staff — must face consequences that are seen, not just announced. Finally, students deserve a credible grievance and re-examination mechanism. Anything less leaves an entire generation rightly unconvinced.

Sanjay Rohmetra

The International Day of Yoga (IDY), observed annually on June 21, stands as a testament to humanity's collective pursuit of harmony, health, and inner peace. In 2026, the 12th edition of this global event is being celebrated under the poignant theme, "Yoga for Wellness, Wisdom, and World Peace." This theme underscores a vital realization: in an era fractured by geopolitical tensions and digitized isolation, true wellness extends far beyond physical fitness.

Yoga is not merely a sequence of physical postures; it is a profound transformative philosophy. It serves as an internal anchor, calming the nervous system while fostering deep self-awareness. By bridging the gap between mind and body, yoga offers an accessible and sustainable antidote to modern lifestyle diseases, chronic stress, and mental exhaustion.

As millions assemble across parks, beaches, and public squares spanning more than 190 nations, the event transcends cultural boundaries. It unites humanity through a shared language of breath and mindfulness. IDY 2026 highlights yoga not as an ancient relic, but as a living, dynamic instrument for global public health, collective mindfulness, and international solidarity—proving that individual inner peace is the ultimate foundation for global harmony.

Yoga evolved from its roots in the Vedic period, where it originated through early rituals and meditative practices, into the pre-classical stage defined by the profound philosophical insights of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. This foundational development culminated in the Classical Era with the codification of the discipline in 's Yoga Sutras, eventually transforming into the modern era as a widely practiced global movement focused on wellness and therapeutic application.

Around 400 CE, the sage Patanjali synthesized these disparate practices into the Yoga Sutras. This seminal work introduced the Ashtanga—Eight-Limbed Path, a comprehensive structural guide encompassing ethics (Yamas and Niyamas), physical postures (Asanas), breath control (Pranayama), and deep meditative absorption (Samadhi). Through the centuries, these practices evolved into Hatha Yoga, ensuring that physical refinement always served as the gateway to profound mental and spiritual liberation.

In 2026, yoga has transitioned from an esoteric Eastern philosophy into a dominant feature of global mainstream wellness culture. Propelled by a universal shift toward

The Yoga Revolution



preventive healthcare, an estimated 350 million people worldwide actively practice yoga. This surge spans diverse demographics, driven by individuals seeking non-invasive, holistic relief from burnout, anxiety, and sedentary health issues.

The global yoga practitioner profile is currently characterized by a significant majority of female participants at approximately 71.8%, though the male demographic is steadily increasing. The dominant age group includes individuals between 30 and 50 years old, representing roughly 43.5% of practitioners, largely motivated by the search for effective stress management solutions.

Geographically, while the Asia-Pacific region commands the largest market share at over 37%, North America and Europe follow closely, establishing yoga as a vital component of international public health systems.

Popular Yoga Forms in 2026
Vinyasa & Power Yoga: Highly popular in urban Western studios, these dynamic practices prioritize cardiovascular endurance and continuous movement synchronized with breath.

Yin Yoga & Restorative Yoga: Focused on deep connective tissues and passive floor poses, these styles provide meditative counterbalances to fast-paced lifestyles.

Hot Yoga & Infrared Fitness: Conducted in rooms heated up to 40°C, this format emphasizes intense detoxification and muscular flexibility.

Corporate & Hybrid Yoga: Modern formats like "Sculpt Flow" combine light weight training with traditional yoga asanas. Fortune 500 corporations heavily rely on these streamlined, desk-friendly adaptations to counter physical fatigue and optimize employee performance.

The 2026 regional landscape reflects diverse adoption patterns: the United States leads with over 40 million practitioners driving a \$16 billion market in classes and apparel; Japan and South Korea are seeing over 10% annual growth as yoga is embraced as a key pillar of healthy longevity among ag-

ing populations; and Germany and Western Europe have integrated yoga into public health systems, with insurance providers subsidizing up to 80% of costs for certified preventive classes.

Meanwhile, in aging nations like and, state-backed community centers offer targeted Chair Yoga and gentle pranayama sessions designed to reduce orthopedic injuries and enhance cardiovascular health among senior citizens.

The path to the International Day of Yoga began in September 2014 when introduced the proposal, leading to the landmark adoption of UN Resolution 69/131 in December 2014 with a record 177 co-sponsors. This established the first global annual observation in June 2015.

On December 11, 2014, the UN General Assembly officially declared June 21—the summer solstice—as the International Day of Yoga.

Further cementing its global status, inscribed Yoga onto its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016.

As the custodian of this ancient heritage, has spearheaded institutional efforts to popularize yoga both domestically and globally. At the heart of this movement is Ministry of AYUSH, established in 2014 as a dedicated ministry to scientifically validate, standardize, and promote traditional knowledge.

The Ministry of AYUSH promotes yoga through dual initiatives: domestically through mandatory school curricula, the Common Yoga Protocol, and integration into over 150,000 wellness centers; and globally through international collaboration, Ayush Academic Chairs, the WHO mYoga app, and technical certification via the Yoga Certification Board.

Over 150,000 Health and Wellness Centres across India actively provide daily yoga sessions to combat chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension. India's flagship International Day of Yoga events engage more than 230 million citizens annually in synchronized mass demonstrations.

Globally, India leverages yoga as a cornerstone of cultural diplomacy and soft power. Indian embassies organize workshops across 190 countries, while ICCR centres offer specialized scholarships to foreign students.

The Economics of Yoga
The commercial transformation of yoga has turned it into an economic powerhouse within the global wellness economy. The global yoga market reached an estimated

valuation of USD 127 billion and is projected to expand to USD 138.6 billion. With a CAGR of 9.9%, the industry is projected to reach USD 269.1 billion by 2033.

Wellness Tourism: Valued at USD 195 billion, yoga retreats and spiritual tourism represent one of the fastest-growing sectors in luxury travel. Spiritual hubs such as , and attract millions of high-spending international travelers seeking immersive detoxification and mindfulness experiences.

By integrating yoga globally, society stands to gain significant dividends across public and corporate sectors, evidenced by a projected 25–30% decrease in stress-induced medical expenditures and a 15% reduction in workplace absenteeism.

Clinical studies indicate that consistent long-term yoga practice can yield major public health benefits.

Regular practice can lead to a 25–30% reduction in medical interventions for stress-induced cardiovascular diseases, Type-2 diabetes, and chronic insomnia.

Institutional corporate yoga programs yield an estimated 15% drop in workplace absenteeism while substantially lowering employee turnover driven by burnout.

From a neurological perspective, yoga functions as a conscious regulator of the autonomic nervous system. Slow, intentional Pranayama stimulates the vagus nerve, shifting the body from a high-stress sympathetic state (fight-or-flight) into a calm parasympathetic state (rest-and-digest). This immediately lowers heart rate, stabilizes blood pressure, and reduces circulating cortisol levels.

The future of humanity depends on balancing external technological power with internal spiritual mastery. If we continue developing sophisticated external machinery without cultivating emotional resilience, we risk deepening collective weakness. Yoga bridges this gap, ensuring that as our world grows more automated and mechanized, our minds remain grounded, compassionate, and self-aware.

The global embrace of yoga signals a shift from a reactive, illness-focused society toward a proactive culture of collective mindfulness. As millions of practitioners breathe in unison across the globe on International Yoga Day 2026, they are doing more than practicing an ancient art—they are helping birth a new global paradigm.

This movement points toward a sophisticated future where intellectual genius is guided by deep inner wisdom, and personal wellness serves as the true foundation for global peace.

This is well-written and highly informative—ideal as an op-ed or special feature for International Yoga Day.

Yoga: A lifelong companion on the journey of ageing

Sharmila Das

As the world prepares to celebrate International Day of Yoga, this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing", has sparked important conversations about wellness in later life. Images of elderly practitioners performing yoga postures with grace and confidence are inspiring, highlighting how the practice can help maintain strength, mobility and independence. Yet the theme also offers an opportunity to rethink a common misconception: ageing is not something that begins in old age.

It starts the moment life begins. From birth onwards, the human body is constantly changing. It grows, adapts, repairs itself and gradually moves through the different stages of life. Ageing is not a sudden event that arrives after retirement; it is a continuous process. The real challenge, therefore, is not avoiding ageing but learning how to support our bodies and minds throughout that journey.

This is where yoga becomes truly valuable. Many people view yoga as a remedy for stress, stiffness, poor posture or declining health. While it certainly helps address these con-



cerns, its deeper purpose lies in prevention. Yoga encourages us to care for our physical and mental well-being long before problems arise.

Movement is essential to healthy living. Children naturally bend, stretch, squat and balance without conscious effort. As adulthood progresses, however, modern lifestyles often replace movement with prolonged sitting, screen time and repetitive routines. Gradually, flexibility decreases, muscles weaken, posture suffers and balance becomes less reliable. These changes occur so slowly

that they often go unnoticed until discomfort or fatigue begins affecting daily life. Yoga offers a simple yet effective way to counter this decline. Stretching practices help preserve flexibility, while mobility exercises keep joints healthy and functional. Strength-building postures support muscles and bones, allowing the body to remain capable and resilient over time. Balance-focused practices improve coordination and stability, reducing the likelihood of injuries as we age.

Importantly, these benefits are not limited to senior citizens. A young professional spending hours at a desk may need them just as much as an older adult.

Breathing is another crucial element of healthy ageing. Though it accompanies us throughout life, we rarely pay attention to it. The demands of modern living often encourage shallow, hurried breathing, which can contribute to stress, poor sleep and reduced energy. Yogic breathing techniques restore awareness to this vital process. A slow, steady

breath helps calm the nervous system, supports mental clarity and promotes recovery and relaxation. The ability to regulate one's breath is a skill that benefits people at every age. Equally important is yoga's impact on mental well-being. Many fears associated with ageing stem from concerns about loss—loss of strength, appearance, independence or certainty. Yoga shifts the focus towards qualities that can continue to grow throughout life: awareness, patience, resilience, gratitude and inner balance. It teaches acceptance without passivity and growth without constant struggle. Ultimately, yoga is not merely a practice for old age; it is a practice for life. It requires no expensive equipment, exceptional flexibility or large amounts of time. Even a few minutes of mindful movement and conscious breathing each day can create lasting benefits. Like any worthwhile investment, small and consistent efforts accumulate over time. This International Yoga Day, let us see yoga not as a response to ageing, but as a lifelong companion that helps us move, breathe and live with greater balance. Ageing begins at birth, but so do strength and wisdom.

When rules fail and lives perish

JS Rajput

A devastating fire broke out in the Malviya Nagar locality of South Delhi on June 3, 2026, claiming the lives of 21 people. The tragedy was not merely an accident; it was the consequence of a chain of failures by those entrusted with enforcing the law. Reports indicated that both the construction and the business operating there were unauthorised and illegal. It is difficult to believe that such an establishment could have functioned without the knowledge of the authorities responsible for approving constructions and issuing licences for hotels, restaurants and bed-and-breakfast facilities. Yet, as is often the case, no senior official responsible for monitoring and enforcement appears to have been suspended or arrested. Public confidence in official assurances has eroded to such an extent that many people are convinced that little will change. A few minor violators may face action, some illegal structures may be demolished, and then the status quo is likely to return. The mechanisms through which violations continue to flourish are, unfortunately, well understood by the public.

Occasionally, voices are raised lamenting the decline of the values once preached and practised by the freedom fighters under the leadership of Gandhi. These values—humility, honesty, integrity, compassion and accountability—were expected to guide governance after Independence. Sadly, for

many citizens, routine interactions with public institutions often reveal a different reality. Whether in municipal offices, revenue departments or police stations, people frequently encounter indifference, inefficiency and a lack of accountability. Can anyone entirely avoid attributing this situation to corruption? Citizens are familiar with the manner in which elected representatives and local authorities are often perceived on matters relating to illegal constructions and regulatory violations.

Reports from different parts of the country concerning commissions, cut-money practices and rent-seeking behaviour have further weakened public faith in governance and justice. The Malviya Nagar tragedy occurred at a time when the nation was already distressed by controversies surrounding examination systems, including the NEET paper leak, difficulties associated with Class XII examinations, technical glitches in CUET and other administrative failures. Although these incidents belong to different sectors, they often stem from similar causes: incompetence, negligence, lack of accountability and insufficient commitment to public welfare.

Whenever major fire accidents occur, investigations commonly reveal that mandatory safety equipment was either absent, outdated or non-functional. In many cases, fire safety certificates had expired long before the accident. Yet one rarely hears of meaningful penalties being imposed before tragedies occur. Preventive enforce-

ment remains weak, while corrective action usually follows only after lives have been lost. The deeper concern is the gradual erosion of our moral and civic consciousness. Rampant lethargy, inefficiency and corruption reflect a declining sensitivity towards fellow citizens and the larger national interest. Public institutions exist to protect life and dignity, but their effectiveness ultimately depends on the character and commitment of those who operate them.

The demolition drives initiated after the Malviya Nagar incident appeared relatively orderly and considerate in their execution. They inevitably invite comparison with similar actions undertaken elsewhere, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. Regardless of one's opinion on such measures, they have generated intense public debate about the enforcement of law, unauthorised constructions, land encroachments and the role of government in protecting public interests.

Meaningful reform demands leaders with imagination, courage and a commitment to public welfare over personal gain. Equally vital is whether official training truly instils responsibility towards the weakest and most vulnerable. Where accountability is weak, illegal occupations of land and unauthorised constructions inevitably flourish. One does not need to look far to find examples of such violations. These structures are often visible reminders of administrative failure and the abdication of responsibility by those entrusted

with enforcing the law. The Malviya Nagar fire is only one among many such tragedies that have occurred over the years. Yet meaningful reforms and lasting accountability remain elusive.

The public debate surrounding bulldozer action in Uttar Pradesh illustrates another dimension of governance. Such actions attracted both strong support and sharp criticism. Supporters viewed them as decisive measures against land grabbers, criminal networks and illegal encroachments, while critics questioned their legality, fairness and implications for due process. Whatever one's position, the debate underscores the importance of ensuring that all enforcement actions remain firmly within constitutional and legal frameworks.

A healthy democracy can provide a better life for all citizens, particularly for young people pursuing education and employment. However, democratic institutions must function sincerely in both letter and spirit. Deficiencies in governance, whether arising from policy failures or administrative shortcomings, must be identified, studied and corrected by those entrusted with public authority. The wisdom expressed by Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, remains profoundly relevant. Addressing the nation on November 26, 1949, he observed that the welfare of the country would ultimately depend not merely on the Constitution but on those who administer it. He warned that even the best Constitution could not succeed if those entrusted with implementing it

lacked character and integrity. Conversely, capable and honest individuals could make even an imperfect system function effectively. They could innovate, inspire, learn more and be more pragmatic. The basic factors responsible for the Malviya Nagar tragedy and the NEET and CBSE failures are not much different, nor really distant. Essentially, these failures are rampant in public services across sectors. It creates a general impression among common people that they can get away with the violation of any sanction, permission or approval. Recent systemic failures that have inflicted avoidable suffering on young students and their parents, or the fire that extinguished lives mercilessly, must necessarily serve as stern reminders that education must focus on nurturing empathy, integrity, responsibility, compassion and the spirit of respecting others. A value-based work culture could help develop men and women of character who would not blindly become slaves to 'maximum accumulation anyhow', but who recognise the limits of material accumulation and the importance of serving society.

Ultimately, institutions derive their strength and reputation from the character and commitment of the functionaries who lead and operate them. If India seeks to prevent tragedies such as the Malviya Nagar fire and strengthen public trust in governance, it must invest not only in better laws and regulations but also in nurturing honesty, accountability and ethical leadership.