

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Om Birla leads MPs in Yoga session, calls Yoga India's responsibility to humanity

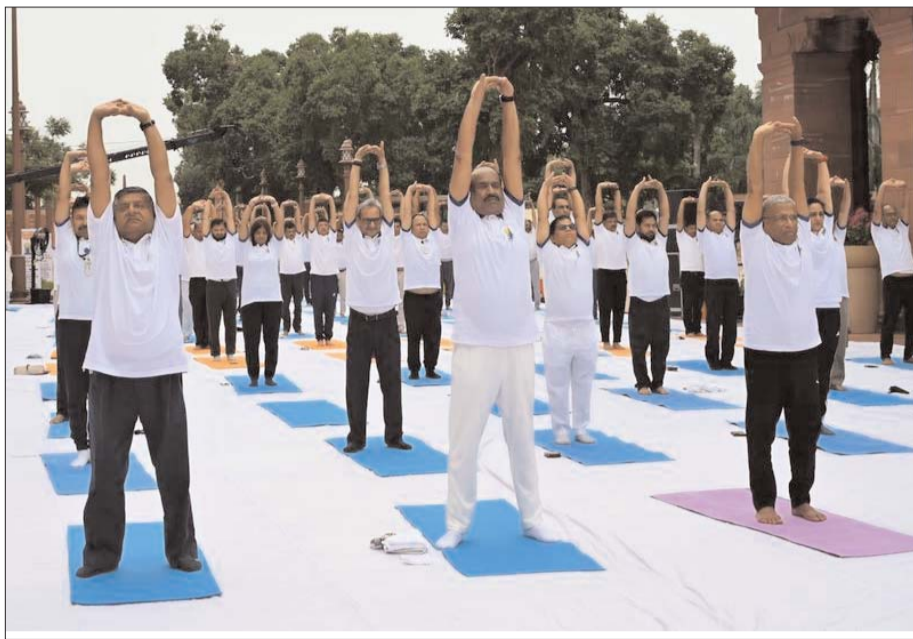
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Sunday led a yoga session with Members of Parliament in the Parliament House Complex on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga, stressing that yoga is a powerful tool for maintaining mental peace, emotional balance and self-discipline, while describing it as both India's civilisational gift to the world and its responsibility towards humanity.

Addressing MPs and participants after the session, Birla extended greetings on the occasion and said the day celebrates India's timeless heritage that has shown humanity a path towards health, balance and inner peace.

"Yoga not only balances the body but also the mind and thoughts. Differences of opinion are natural in Parliament, but yoga shows us the path of dialogue and self-restraint," he said, linking the practice of yoga with the values necessary for democratic functioning.

The Lok Sabha Speaker underlined that India's sages and scholars had preserved the tradition of yoga over centuries and established it as a way of life aimed at promoting physical health, mental peace and the awakening of human consciousness. While yoga has today evolved into a global movement embraced across continents, he said its roots remain firmly embedded in India's ancient knowledge tradition.

Drawing attention to the pressures of modern life, Birla said contemporary so-



ciety is increasingly marked by stress, imbalance and uncertainty, making yoga more relevant than ever. "Yoga is a powerful means of maintaining mental peace, patience, and emotional balance," he said, adding that one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century is mental stress and that yoga offers an accessible, scientific and inclusive solution to address it.

He also urged the younger generation to incorporate yoga into their daily routines. Referring to the growing influence of digital technology, Birla said today's youth should make yoga an integral part of their lifestyle to balance excessive screen time and stress. Emphasising that yoga extends beyond physical fitness, the speaker said it contributes to the development of personality, character and consciousness. According to him, regular yoga practice helps individuals be-

come more balanced, improves their decision-making abilities, and enhances their overall well-being.

"Healthy citizens are the greatest asset of a strong democracy," Birla said, adding that if India's 1.4 billion people devote even a few minutes each day to yoga, it could trigger the country's largest public health revolution. The speaker also highlighted the role of elected representatives in spreading awareness about yoga. As public representatives remain in constant contact with society, they can play a significant role in encouraging people to adopt yoga and understand its transformative benefits, he said.

"Democracy requires dialogue, and open discussion requires mental balance—yoga teaches exactly that," Birla remarked, arguing that the values cultivated through yoga can contribute to

stronger democratic institutions and more constructive public discourse.

Calling for yoga to become a permanent part of everyday life, he said, "Yoga is not just India's soft power; it is India's responsibility to humanity." He urged citizens to treat yoga not as an annual event but as a lifelong practice, adding, "Yoga must become not a one-day celebration but a 365-day commitment."

The International Day of Yoga, observed globally every year on June 21 following a United Nations resolution adopted in 2014, seeks to raise awareness about the benefits of yoga for physical and mental well-being. India has marked the occasion through mass yoga events across the country, with participation from public representatives, government institutions and citizens. (Agencies)

Adityanath mocks Pakistan over Op Sindoor, says 'made in UP' BrahMos forced it to seek mercy

MAHOPA, JUNE 21: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday mocked Pakistan over Operation Sindoor, saying that when 'made in UP' BrahMos missiles were fired at the neighbouring country, it was going around the world seeking mercy.

Adityanath was addressing the public after inaugurating and laying the foundation of 88 development projects worth Rs 697 crore in Mahoba.

Adityanath said, "The day when BrahMos missiles manufactured in Uttar Pradesh's Defence Industrial Corridor were fired at Pak-



istan, it was seeking mercy... Will this Pakistan be able to fight with India?"

According to Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority,

the corridor passes through Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Kanpur and Lucknow districts.

He said that in the future such a missile hub will be set

up in Mahoba, Hamirpur, and Chitrakoot districts.

Adityanath said, "Now, tanks are being manufactured in Bundelkhand and the enemy trembles with fear because of the guns and tanks made here."

The chief minister added that his government has made the mafia "bite the dust".

Speaking on International Yoga Day, he said that a healthy mind will reside in a healthy body. A healthy mind will lead to a healthy brain, which will lead to a healthy soul. A healthy soul becomes the reason for public welfare. (PTI)

PM Modi takes extra care while travel so that NEET candidates don't face inconvenience

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday delayed his travel to his residence after arriving at Delhi's IGI airport from Kolkata, taking extra care to ensure no candidate appearing in the NEET re-examination here faces any inconvenience due to traffic restrictions.

Sources said after arriving at the IGI airport at around 1:15 PM, the Prime Minister chose to wait at the airport instead of immediately leaving for his residence at Lok Kalyan Marg.

Since the NEET examination was scheduled to begin



at 2 PM, the Prime Minister decided to leave for his residence only after the exam commenced, ensuring that no student faces any inconvenience in reaching the ex-

amination centre and that traffic movement remained unaffected, sources said.

The Prime Minister was returning from his two-day trip of Odisha and West Ben-

gal during which, among other events, he participated in a programme in Kolkata on the occasion of International Yoga Day on Sunday.

The National Testing Agency is conducting the NEET-UG 2026 re-exam for admission into the undergraduate course in medical colleges on Sunday.

The test was originally scheduled for May 3 but was cancelled due to the alleged leak of the question papers.

The re-examination on Sunday is scheduled from 2.00 PM to 5.15 PM. It is being conducted across 5,440 centres in 551 cities in India and 14 centres abroad.

Universities should nurture Indian culture, tradition alongside modernity: Murmu

JABALPUR, (MP), JUN 21: President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday stressed the need for universities and institutions to inculcate the spirit of Indian culture and tradition in students, alongside modernity.

Murmu was addressing the 36th convocation of the Rani Durgavati Vishwa Vidyalaya (RDVV) in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur.

"Universities and institutions are expected to inculcate the spirit of Indian culture and tradition in students, along with modernity," she said, stressing the need to promote skills and knowledge among tribal communities.

She called upon the youth to maintain the "sanctity" of their identity and tradition, saying that balanced development of the country is possible only through the coordination of modernity and tradition.

Rani Durgavati, in whose name this university is established, was the epitome of renunciation, hard work and dedication. She has been recognised as the great ruler of the Gondwana Empire, Murmu noted.

The President said Rani Durgavati has been a symbol of inspiration for women's empowerment.

"It is important to bring forward those who have been left behind in the race for development and integrate them into the mainstream.



We must all work together to ensure that our students and youth have the opportunity to participate in modern development," she said.

Murmu expressed happiness that there was a significant number of females among those receiving gold medals at the convocation.

She described this as a symbol of the country's all-round development and said that India is a country of youth, who constitute nearly 65 per cent of the population.

These youth have the indomitable courage to do anything, and the country and its citizens have great expectations from them, Murmu stressed.

"These expectations will only be fulfilled when they get employment according to their qualifications. The central and state governments are making efforts to achieve

this," she said.

The President further said that today the entire world is changing rapidly, and along with it, everything, including our clothing and lifestyle, is also changing at a rapid pace.

"We must never forget that we have certain values that always empower us. I believe that young people like you should make the values and ideals of Indian culture the foundation of their lives," she said.

Values like truth, non-violence, compassion, and service are part of the basic human consciousness. By adopting these values in your lives, you can face even difficult situations and make a significant contribution to nation-building, she added.

Murmu described the youth as the architects of India's future, emphasising that the future rests on their

shoulders.

"The dream of a developed India will be realised only through your knowledge. I urge you to use your education and talent for the prosperity and well-being of society. Understand the problems of the underprivileged and rural communities around you and develop solutions tailored to their needs. Empower them and play your role in connecting them to the mainstream of development," she said.

Murmu also appealed to the youth to fulfil their responsibility towards the environment and said that conservation of water, forests, and land should be part of their life journey.

Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Mohan Yadav also addressed the convocation. (AGENCIES)

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 21: The Punjab Police has busted a gangster module linked to foreign-based handlers and arrested three operatives, seizing three foreign-made sophisticated pistols and ammunition from their possession, DGP Gaurav Yadav said on Sunday.

In a post on X, Yadav said the operation was carried out by the State Special Opera-

tions Cell (SSOC), Amritsar, and Counter Intelligence, Jalandhar, in coordination with a central agency.

"In a breakthrough against organised crime and gangster networks, SSOC Amritsar and Counter Intelligence Jalandhar, in coordination with a central agency, busted a gangster module linked to foreign-based handlers, apprehended three operatives and recovered three foreign-

made sophisticated pistols along with ammunition," Yadav wrote.

An FIR has been registered at the SSOC police station in Amritsar, he said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused were acting on the directions of foreign-based gangsters involved in gang wars, extortion and other disruptive activities in Punjab, the DGP said.

According to the investigation, the accused were transporting consignments of weapons and carrying out criminal activities at the behest of their handlers abroad.

The arrestees are also linked to a murder case registered in Amritsar and an attempted murder case in Batala.

Further investigations are underway, Yadav added. (Agencies)

Dipke, BJP supporters continue sit-in overnight at Jantar Mantar, urge people to join protest

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21: Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke, along with supporters, continued the sit-in protest at Jantar Mantar overnight, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak controversy, and urged people to join the demonstration on Sunday.

The protest entered its second day as Dipke appealed to people to reach Jantar Mantar, while asking NEET re-exam aspirants to join the agitation after completing their test.

"We are holding the fort but without your support this movement won't be successful," Dipke said as he urged people to join the protest on Sunday.

The demonstration has continued even after Delhi Police said the permission granted for the gathering ended at 5 pm on Saturday



and asked the protesters to vacate the site.

Dipke asked police to assign a different site for the protest, but until then, they would continue their sit-in at Jantar Mantar.

In a series of posts on X, Dipke appealed to police not to stop people from coming to Jantar Mantar, saying the protesters were not doing anything wrong and were only seeking justice for students who died by suicide.

He also requested authorities to restore water supply to public restrooms at the protest site, claiming that

there had been no water supply since Saturday night. The protesters had earlier alleged that lights at the site were switched off and access to water, food and washrooms was restricted.

They later said drinking water access was restored, and lights were switched back on.

The Delhi Police had on Saturday night directed Dipke and the protesters to vacate the venue, saying the demonstration had permission only from 10 am to 5 pm.

The police said continua-

tion beyond the permitted hours was a violation of the conditions of permission and warned of legal action.

As the night progressed, Dipke and the protesters remained at the site, turning the demonstration into an overnight sit-in. The protesters continued raising slogans demanding Pradhan's resignation, and the protest site saw a steady presence of supporters through the night, with Dipke continuing to address the gathering and urging more people to join the demonstration.

Several protesters carried placards and raised slogans, and the atmosphere remained charged at Jantar Mantar.

Dipke said the protest would continue peacefully and reiterated his appeal for dialogue with the Centre, saying the channel for talks remained open if accountability was fixed and the education minister resigned.

Thousands mark Yoga Day worldwide under 'Healthy Ageing' theme

BELJING/WASHINGTON, JUNE 21: From Tokyo's historic temples, to the iconic Arco della Pace in Milan, yoga enthusiasts across the world came together on Sunday to celebrate the International Day of Yoga, reaffirming the ancient Indian practice's growing appeal as a pathway to health, balance and well-being.

International Day of Yoga (IDY) is celebrated globally on June 21 every year, since its adoption by the United Nations

in 2014.

This year's celebrations, themed "Yoga for Healthy Ageing", highlighted yoga's relevance in promoting physical fitness, mental resilience and holistic wellness at every stage of life.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Moscow, in collaboration with the Moscow City Government, organised the IDY celebrations at the iconic Universitetnaya Square, Lomonosov Moscow



State University.

"Hundreds of participants joined the mass practice of the Common Yoga Protocol at the XII International Day of Yoga celebrations in Moscow, led by Mr. Bhup Singh Thakur, Yoga teacher at the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Moscow," the Embassy of India in Russia posted on X.

In China, around 400 people, including diplomats, academics, yoga practitioners and members of the Indian diaspora, participated in celebrations

organised by the Consulate General of India in Shanghai at the Bund Finance Centre.

Addressing the gathering, Consul General Pratik Mathur described yoga as India's gift to the world and underscored its growing role in promoting holistic health, mental well-being and active ageing, according to a statement issued by the consulate.

The programme featured a guided meditation session, a Manipuri dance

performance, an Indian classical music recital and a demonstration on the benefits of yoga.

In Japan, more than 2,100 yoga enthusiasts joined celebrations organised by the Indian Embassy at the historic Tsukiji Hongan-ji Temple in Tokyo.

"Despite the rain, with the motto 'Yoga together, rain or shine!', the venue was filled with energy and smiles," the Indian Embassy in Tokyo said in a post on X.