

CURRENT AFFAIRS: 21.06.2026

International Day of Yoga 2026

Why in News?

As India celebrates the **12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) on 21st June 2026**, the Ministry of Ayush's **Yoga Sangam Portal** has achieved a significant milestone, with over 6 lakh organizations registering to participate in the nationwide yoga event and perform yoga simultaneously with the Prime Minister of India.

- International Day of Yoga 2026, themed "Yoga for Healthy Ageing", highlights Yoga's role in promoting physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, while showcasing its evolution from an ancient Indian philosophical tradition to a globally recognized wellness practice.
- India is leveraging Yoga as a strategic soft-power tool through Yoga diplomacy, wellness tourism, global outreach, and digital platforms to strengthen its cultural influence, economic opportunities, and image as a Vishwabandhu (friend of the world).

What are the Key Highlights of International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026?

Key Highlights of IDY 2026

- **Theme:** The theme for IDY 2026 is "**Yoga for Healthy Ageing**". It focuses on promoting physical vitality, mental resilience, and holistic wellness across all stages of life.
 - The 2026 theme aligns with the **WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030)** by promoting independence among older adults, reducing fall-related risks, improving quality of life, and encouraging person-centered approaches to health and well-being.
- **Yoga Sangam Initiative:** This is a flagship initiative aiming to connect institutions and communities nationwide through synchronized yoga sessions based on the **Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)**.
 - Instead of a single-location celebration, organizations can conduct sessions at their own venues while remaining part of a collective national movement.

International Day of Yoga

- **UNGA Declaration:** In **2014**, the UN General Assembly adopted an India-led resolution under the "**Global Health and Foreign Policy**" agenda to declare **21st June as the International Day of Yoga**.
- **Significance of 21st June:** Chosen because it is the **Summer Solstice**, the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere, which marks an event considered to be the **start of Yogic science in Indian mythology**.
- **Holistic Health Benefits:** The UN recognized Yoga for its ability to build **resilience against non-communicable diseases** and help people find relief from stress, particularly in modern lifestyles.
- **IDY 2015 (First Edition):** The first IDY was celebrated in 2015 with the theme "Yoga for Harmony and Peace".
 - Held at Rajpath, New Delhi, the event established **two Guinness World Records**: one for the world's largest yoga class (35,985 people) and another for the maximum number of participating nationalities (84).
- **Logo Symbolism:** The IDY logo features **folded hands representing the union of consciousness**, alongside elements symbolizing Earth (brown leaves), Nature (green leaves), Water (blue), Fire (brightness), and the Sun (source of energy), reflecting perfect harmony between man and nature.
- **Nodal Ministry:** The **Ministry of Ayush** is the nodal agency for coordinating IDY celebrations and related initiatives in India.

What is Yoga?

- **Definition:** Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science that focuses on bringing harmony between the mind and body. It is both an art and a science of healthy living.
 - **Yoga is one of the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy** (along with Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Mimamsa, Vedanta).
- **Etymology:** The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', which means 'to join', 'to yoke', or 'to unite'.
- **Core Philosophy:** According to yogic scriptures, practice leads to the union of individual consciousness with the Universal Consciousness.
 - This indicates a perfect harmony between the mind and body, and between man and nature.
 - The primary aim of Yoga is **Self-realization** overcoming all forms of suffering to reach a state of liberation (**Moksha**) or freedom (**Kaivalya**). One who experiences this **oneness of existence is termed a yogi**.
- **The First Yogi:** In yogic lore, the science of yoga originated thousands of years before the first religions. **Shiva** is revered as the first yogi (*Adiyogi*) and the first Guru (*Adi Guru*).
 - Thousands of years ago, on the banks of **Lake Kantisarovar in the Himalayas**, **Adiyogi** imparted his profound knowledge to the legendary **Saptarishis** (seven sages).
- **Traditional Schools of Yoga:** Emerged from diverse philosophical traditions, guru-shishya lineages, and spiritual practices, giving rise to forms such as **Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Jain Yoga, and Buddhist Yoga**.

Chronological Evolution of Yoga

- **Pre-Vedic / Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2700 B.C. onwards):** Historical evidence of Yoga's existence begins here.
 - Fossil remains and seals, most notably the Pashupati Seal, depict figures seated in traditional yogic postures.
 - Phallic symbols and idols of the mother Goddess from this era suggest the earliest, primitive forms of Tantra Yoga.
- **Vedic & Upanishad Period:** Yoga practices and related literature from this era are found in the **4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, Smritis, Epics, and Puranas**.
 - Yoga was part of *Upasana* (worship). The practice of **Surya Namaskara** likely originated here due to the high reverence for the Sun, and **Pranayama (breath control)** was utilized as part of daily oblations.
- **Classical Period (500 B.C. – 800 A.D.):** Considered the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga.
 - The foundational concepts of *Yoga Sadhana* (disciplined practice) are heavily attributed to this era's dominant spiritual movements, specifically **Lord Mahavira's Five Great Vows (Pancha Mahavrata)** and **Lord Buddha's Eightfold Path (Ashtangika Marga)**.
 - The **Bhagavad Gita** and Vyasa's commentaries on it and the Yoga Sutras came into existence, detailing distinct paths to liberation: **Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Karma Yoga**.
 - The **sage Patanjali** systematically compiled yogic knowledge, introducing the **Eight Limbs of Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga)**, which provided a guide for ethical principles, postures, breath control, and meditation.
- **Post-Classical Period (800 A.D. – 1700 A.D.):** Yoga continued to evolve through the teachings of the great **Acharyatrayas (Adi Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhavacharya)**.
 - Great contributors during this time included **Bhakti saints** like Suradasa, Tulasidasa, Purandardasa, and Mirabai.

- Tantra traditions began incorporating complex rituals, and the **Hatha Yoga Pradipika (15th Century CE)** was written by **Yogi Swatmarama**, shifting focus heavily toward the physical body to prepare for higher meditation.
- **Modern Period (1700 A.D. – Present):** The period from 1700–1900 A.D. saw the flourishing of **Vedanta, Bhakti Yoga, Natha Yoga, and Hatha Yoga**.
- Great Yogacharyas like **Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Paramhansa Yogananda, and Swami Vivekananda** contributed immensely to the development of Raja Yoga and sparked global interest in Hindu philosophy by traveling to the West.
- In the 20th century, figures like **Tirumalai Krishnamacharya** (the "father of modern yoga") and his disciples B.K.S. Iyengar and Pattabhi Jois developed distinct, physically rigorous styles such as Iyengar Yoga and Ashtanga Vinyasa.

Uzbekistan 10th Member of the New Development Bank

Uzbekistan has become the **10th member** of the **New Development Bank (NDB)** and the **first country from Central Asia** to join the **BRICS-led multilateral financial institution**.

New Development Bank (NDB)

- **About:** The NDB is a multilateral development bank established jointly by the **BRICS states** (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).
- **Formation:** It was agreed upon during the 6th BRICS Summit in **Fortaleza, Brazil (2014)** and became fully operational in 2015.
 - The NDB established its initial authorized capital at USD 100 billion. Of this, the initial subscribed capital was set at USD 50 billion, which was divided equally among the five founding members (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).
- **Headquarters:** Shanghai, China.
- **Objective:** To mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in **BRICS and other Emerging Market Economies and Developing Countries (EMDCs)**.
- **Voting Power:** Unlike the World Bank, where voting power is based on capital share, the NDB operates on an equal voting basis.
 - **Each member has one vote**, and no country possesses a veto. However, the combined voting share of the **founding BRICS members can never fall below 55%**.
- **Membership Expansion:** According to the NDB's Articles of Agreement, all **members of the United Nations can join the bank**. Starting its expansion in 2021, the NDB has grown beyond its five founding members.
 - The current membership includes the original BRICS nations along with Bangladesh (2021), United Arab Emirates (2021), Egypt (2023), Algeria (2025), and Uzbekistan (2026).
 - Additionally, Uruguay, Colombia, and Ethiopia have been admitted by the NDB Board of Governors and will become official members upon depositing their instruments of accession.
 - The **NDB members represent 42% of world population, 27% of the global surface area and accounting for over 20% of the Global GDP**.
- **Significance:** The expansion reinforces the NDB's role as a voice of the Global South and supports BRICS-led efforts to promote local currency financing and reduce dependence on the US dollar.

- **Connect Central Asia Policy:** As a founding member of both BRICS and the NDB, India views the inclusion of Uzbekistan favorably. It aligns seamlessly with India's "**Connect Central Asia Policy**."

India to Assume Vice-Presidency of FATF for 1st Time

India will assume the Vice-Presidency of the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** for the first time, with Vivek Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, appointed for the term from July 2026 to June 2027.

- **Role:** The FATF Vice-President assists the President in steering the organisation's work and carrying out its mandate. The FATF Presidency runs for a two-year term.
- **Significance:** This is a **landmark recognition of India's growing credibility in the global fight against money laundering and terror financing**, and strengthens India's prospects of assuming the FATF Presidency in the future.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- **Establishment:** The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** was set up in **1989** at the initiative of the **G-7 summit in Paris** as a global watchdog for financial integrity.
- **Core objective:** Initially focused on **combating money laundering**, FATF's mandate was later expanded to include **terrorist financing (2001)** and **financing of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation (2012)**.
- **Global Network:** FATF has **40 members, while more than 200 jurisdictions** are committed to its recommendations through the FATF-style regional bodies, making it a key institution in safeguarding the international financial system.
- **Governance & Enforcement:** The FATF Plenary meets **three times a year, monitors compliance and can place non-compliant countries under a "grey list" or "black list"** (high-risk jurisdictions) for increased monitoring.
- **India's status:** India became an **Observer at the FATF in 2006** and was subsequently admitted as the **34th member in June 2010**. India has implemented risk-based legislative frameworks under the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002** and the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967**.