

Speech by SHA at opening ceremony for International Yoga Day (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, at the opening ceremony for the International Yoga Day today (June 19):

Dr Andiappan (Director of International Yoga Academy, Dr Yogananth Andiappan), Ms Hsu (Director of Anahata Yoga, Ms Anna Hsu), distinguished guests, respectable volunteers, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am much delighted to join you today to commemorate the seventh International Day of Yoga.

With this year's focus on "Yoga for Well-being", the International Day of Yoga is particularly relevant to the mental and physical health dimensions of the world at a time when the pandemic flips over the lives and livelihood of people globally. In fact, this invaluable gift from India's ancient tradition works wonders on people in distress whether during the pandemic or at a stressful time on any day.

Unlike many other physical activities, Yoga is an easy practicable choice for people to foster good mental and physical health. It can be practised by anyone to savour the joys of Yoga almost anytime anywhere, all one needs is a good enough space and the techniques, which had better be taught.

So, I am very glad to know and thankful for the incredible work of Dr Andiappan and everyone in the team in organising free Yoga programmes for the disadvantaged and, more importantly, the tremendous effort of teaching volunteers in giving such classes.

The Government is committed to developing a strong sporting culture in our community. We have been working hard to reach out to all citizens in this regard. Take for example, currently, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department under my Bureau is organising a wide variety of community sports activities to encourage people of different age groups, abilities and interests to participate in sports activities regularly, Yoga included, of course.

That said, Yoga is not just a physical activity, but also, as put by one of the most notable Yoga masters, the late B. K. S. Iyengar, "cultivates the ways of maintaining a balanced attitude in day-to-day life and endows skill in the performance of one's actions". The benefits of Yoga are therefore beyond holistic health, the positive impacts of Yoga will surely continue to reach the wider community.

I wish you all every success in your endeavours to promote Yoga. May every one of you enjoy good health, and a joyful experience in today's event.

Thank you.