

High Commission Of India
Pretoria

PRESS RELEASE

Celebration of the 12th International Day Of Yoga (IDY 2026) at the Union Building, South Lawns, Pretoria

The High Commission of India, Pretoria, in collaboration with members of the South African and Indian communities, friends of India, wellness enthusiasts, and yoga practitioners, celebrated the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY 2026) on Sunday, June 21, 2026. The main event was hosted at the historic South Lawns of the Union Building in Pretoria, drawing participation of over 800 people. This marked an impressive 100% increase in attendance from the previous year, serving as a powerful testament to the growing popularity of Yoga as a preferred path for holistic well-being across South Africa.

In the lead-up to the main event, the High Commission organized a series of highly successful curtain-raiser events across key institutions to promote community wellness. These yoga sessions were conducted at prominent venues including Crawford International School, Stadio Higher Education Centre, Tshwane South TVET College, Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj, and Virgin Active Loftus Park. A special "Yoga for Diplomats" curtain-raiser was also hosted at India House, which was attended by Mrs. Rochelle Botes, spouse of the Honorable Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Mr. Alvin Botes.

A distinct highlight of this year's main event was the performance of 108 Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskar), organized in collaboration with Virgin Active. The session was enthusiastically embraced by 200 participants of all age groups.

Delivering the keynote address at the historic Union Buildings, the High Commissioner highlighted Yoga as an invaluable global movement for holistic wellness, tracing its journey from its landmark 2014 UN General Assembly adoption, proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and co-sponsored by 177 nations including South Africa, to its contribution to global health and harmony. He also emphasized that yoga resonated with the Indian philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam "The World is One Family" and the African ethos of Ubuntu "I am because we are".

Aligning with the 2026 theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing," and the WHO Decade of Healthy Ageing, High Commissioner stressed on yoga's role in fostering resilience against chaos, stress and lifestyle disorders. Highlighting strong bilateral ties, the High Commissioner underscored the impact of India's fully funded ITEC training programme for yoga teachers, wherein 15 participants from South Africa and Lesotho attended. The High Commissioner also encouraged the participants to apply for the upcoming Special Training Programme for Yoga Trainers from 24 June to 20 July 2026.

The IDY programme concluded with a series of guided yoga asanas, deep breathing exercises, and meditation sessions led by expert yoga teachers. The High Commissioner felicitated the yoga instructors who contributed positively in organizing the curtain raiser events and main event. The event also featured the official launch of a new book called 'Restorative Yoga: For a Healthier Way of Life', authored by Mr. Ashwin Harispersad. The event was well received by the diaspora members, yoga practitioners and a testimony of yoga's increasing popularity in South Africa.

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