

International Day of Yoga

Revisiting the benefits of yoga

M N KUNDU

It has been decided by the United Nations to observe June 21 as International Day of Yoga with record number of countries including Bangladesh supporting the proposal initiated by the Indian Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi. In United Nations General Council he said, "Yoga is an invaluable gift of ancient Indian tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature and a holistic approach to health and well-being. Yoga is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with ourselves, the world and Nature."

Yoga has been internationally acclaimed as panacea for the humanity effecting harmonious well-being and healing of body and mind. Its gymnastic uses are widely known and its immense therapeutic potentialities in prevention and cure of even incurable diseases have attracted appropriate attention of all concerned.

At the very outset it must be remembered that yoga is neither a religion nor a philosophy. It concerns universal culture of humanity for betterment of performance and quality of living in every aspect. It enables us to connect with limitless dimension



of our formless self beyond body and mind and awakens latent potential hidden within us.

The gross aspect of creation including our thoughts is vibratory in nature being manifestation of life force which forms, sustains and transforms everything.

They found that breath is the conveyance of life force and bridge between body and mind. Our entire mental activities like perceiving, thinking, feeling and willing process are intimately dependent on breathing and by concentration, regulation and suspension of the same at will we can go back to our own undiffer-

entiated consciousness.

Nobel laureate quantum physicist Schrodinger thinks that mind, matter and life force are all derived from consciousness which is always experienced in singular and plurality of consciousness is the result of cosmic delusion. Yoga enables us to be united with that cosmic source of ours.

Yogasanas or pranayamas are never physical or breathing exercises being intimately dependent on thinking, feeling and willing with affirmation of mind over body and distribution of life-force to concerned body-parts and mind. To that extent

these are far superior to any other exercises. Yoga is free of any side-effect and inexpensive and can be practised by anybody.

Raj yoga or the royal path concerns mastery over mind, emotion, intellect and ego and transcending the fivefold modification of mind like-intellect, emotion, imagination, memory and sleep.

Patanjali explained eightfold limbs of yoga like yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana and Samadhi. The first two relates to don'ts and do's for self-purification. Asana relates to various postures while pranayam means regulation of life force.

Pratyahar means withdrawal of mind from anything at will while dharana and dhyana start with conceptualisation through concentration whereby we may glide into the mystery beyond modifications of mind in Samadhi.

Drop out ego and you are in yoga, stick to ego and you are in bhoga (enjoyment or suffering). Analytical self-inquiry of our true identity, origin, dissolution and purpose can be made through the path of wisdom or Jnana Yoga. Those who are devotional by nature can unconditionally surrender to the Almighty to be driven by universal will through the path of Bhakti Yoga. If we expand our ego by rendering selfless service to the humanity without expecting any reward it becomes Karma Yoga.

Yoga undoubtedly keeps us physically fit and mentally poised through prevention and cure of all ailments. It is the best way for management of stress and human resource development for betterment of performance and quality of living. To the eligible seekers it is a spiritual way to self-realisation. Hence whatever may be our driving motivation or felt necessity we may adopt yoga as the way to fulfilment.

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GIRL POWER IN PLAY

Get more girls in the game!

Against the backdrop of the FIFA Women's World Cup, a coalition of leading athletes and advocates called on policy makers and sporting organisations worldwide to increase investments in girls' sport

programmes as a path to improve gender and health equality globally in Ottawa, Canada recently. The Call to Action was launched at the Girl Power in Play Symposium, hosted by global advocacy organisations Women Deliver, Unicef, Right to Play, One Goal and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

The symposium reflected a growing consensus that, beyond the health benefits, sport programmes provide girls with a supportive network of role models and peers, and can foster better health, education, nutrition, as well as chance to gain critical life-skills.

Participants and partners issued a formal Call to Action asking decision makers from all sectors – government, private, media, research and civil society – to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of girls and women to play sport. In particular, Symposium participants called on stakeholders to incorporate sport programs into global and national strategies to address gender inequality, increase funding for girls' sport programmes & support research on the impact of girls' involvement in sport, particularly on their health and equality.

The symposium is part of a bigger effort to shine the light on the critical role sport programmes can play in improving girls' and women's health and rights – and the positive ripple effect they have on communities.



HEALTH bulletin

Are you aware of MERS?

DR GOLAM NABI

Are you going for Hajj this year? Then you should be careful. Please go through the following preventive measure which can protect you from being the fatal outcome.

MERS, stands for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus. The same family of virus causes common cold called MERS-CoV.

MERS-CoV was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Since then, it has been reported in other countries in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States. Most cases outside of the Middle East have been reported by people who recently traveled there.

MERS-CoV primarily causes simple viral infection or flu like illness producing symptoms like fever, cough and shortness of breath.

Most people with this infection can get well within a week or two but some times people produce serious symptoms which may include nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Pneumonia is common complication, and sometimes it may cause severe injury to organs, such as the kidneys. In severe cases people may presents with bleeding from different site which would be fatal and leading to death.

Treatment for MERS-CoV is directed at relieving symptoms and includes rest, plenty of fluids, pain relievers and oxygen therapy in severe cases.



About 30% of people with MERS-CoV have died. You are most at risk of serious illness if you are an older adult or if you have a weak immune system or a chronic disease, such as diabetes, heart disease or lung disease.

Unlike influenza or the common cold, MERS-CoV does not seem to spread readily among people in communities. Instead, MERS-CoV has spread mostly among people who are in close contact, such as people living with or providing direct care for an infected person.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent MERS-CoV. However, as with any virus, you can reduce your risk of infection by using good health and hygiene practice. During Hajj, millions of people come to Mecca and Madina from all over the world. People during ritual performance like Tawaf, come in close contact with each other making vulnerable for cross infection.

These can be prevented to utmost extent if you follow the following

instruction.

- Vigorously wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the trash immediately, and then wash your hands carefully.
 - Use disposable mask during Tawaf or when people gathering in Muzdalfa or Arafat.
 - Avoid touching your face, mouth and nose with unwashed hands.
 - Don't share cups, utensils or other items with sick people.
 - Take plenty of water during Tawaf, in Arafat and Muzdalfa.
 - Last but not the least during Hajj if you have cough, fever, runny nose, immediately consult a physician.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are closely monitoring the virus. They are currently not recommending changing your plans if you are traveling to the Middle East or other places where the virus has been reported.
- If you have traveled to the Arabian Peninsula or a neighbouring country and you develop a fever and symptoms of MERS-CoV within 14 days of returning, see your doctor and discuss your recent travel.
- May Allah protect all the pilgrims from MERS and they can safely back home after performing Hajj.

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Health benefits of fish oil

Fish oil contains EPA (eicosapentanoic acid) and DHA (docosahexanoic acid); both are omega-3 fatty acids. These long-chained fatty acids have been shown to have many positive effects.

As a part of the cell membranes, fatty acids help form a physical barrier to keep out viruses, bacteria and other foreign molecules. They also regulate the traffic of substances in and out of the cells.

Benefits of Omega-3s:

- Anti-inflammatory
- Enhances immune function
- Treats Crohn's disease
- Lowers high triglycerides
- Helps premature infants with catch-up growth
- Can help treat depression
- Can decrease atherosclerosis
- Can lower the risk of cancer
- Can help lower blood pressure
- Can be used to treat kidney disease
- Used to treat schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactive disorder



/StarHealthBD

Cervical cancer not just a young woman's disease

There is a perception that cervical cancer is a young woman's disease, but half of deaths occur in women over 65, a British Medical Journal report says.

It argues that the age limit for cervical screening should be raised to 70 and older women should be targeted in health campaigns. The report says the number of older women affected is set to increase. While cervical cancer is the most common cancer in women under 35, it continues to affect women of all ages.

Lead report author Dr Sue Sherman, senior lecturer in psychology at Keele University, said the figures suggest that older women are not getting themselves screened to prevent cervical cancer.

Prof Julietta Patnick, director of the NHS cancer screening programmes, said, "The natural history of cervical cancer means that it is unlikely that women of 65 and over who have been regularly screened and discharged from the programme will go on to develop the disease."



Vaccine against cervical cancer is available.

Knowing for better living

Take sehri in time

Avoid salty & fried foods in sehri

Take usual amount of meal in sehri

Drink at least half a liter of water in sehri

Consult your doctor

"Take meal a little before dawn, for there is a blessing in taking meal at that time."

Al-Hadith (Muslim, 2412)



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