



#REVIEW

Free Classes, No Flexibility Required!

A banker's unlikely Yoga mission

As the soft rays of the sun peek through the trees at Dhanmondi Lake, a group of women spread their yoga mats.



Md Rokanuzzaman Tutul, their instructor, fusses over the arrangement of mats, ensuring ample space is available for effective movement.



This is the usual scenario you may encounter if you happen to visit Dhanmondi Lake on a fine morning.

Leading these yoga sessions is Md Rokanuzzaman Tutul, a banker by profession, who earned his Diploma in Yoga from the Bardhaman Yoga Center in India, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Yoga. He runs an initiative named "Matri Mongol," with a vision to support mothers and other women by providing them free access to yoga — thereby, helping them maintain physical and mental well-being. "This initiative was conceived in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic to bring the benefits of yoga to everyone, irrespective of gender, age, or religious background," explains Tutul. "My philosophy is deeply rooted in the belief that yoga is a treasure trove of benefits that should be accessible to everyone. So, now, not only women, but men also join the classes," he elaborates.

The sessions are held three days a week, free of charge, fostering a community of wellness and support among the participants. While originally founded to ensure the well-being of women, the initiative warmly welcomes men who are interested in exploring the benefits of yoga.

In his classes, Tutul emphasises a variety of asanas — from Balasana (Child's Pose) for relaxation and Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose) that cater to all levels, ensuring that each participant can benefit regardless of their prior experience.

"Yoga connects me with myself and my surroundings. It helps manage weight, stress, and joint pain or stiffness. Now, I know how to stay happy physically and mentally, overcoming all obstacles," Tutul highlights, adding, "I want everyone to experience the life-altering benefits of yoga so that they can learn this practice and pass it on to others."

However, no matter how noble an individual's intention is, they are bound to face criticism and societal resistance along the way.

"Many people have thrown negative comments at me, questioning why I teach yoga to women, and I was even asked to leave a public space just for teaching yoga," he recounts. These experiences, though painful, have only strengthened his resolve to continue his mission.

"I continue with the hope that sooner or later, we will learn to be open-minded and heal not only ourselves but our entire society," he states, expressing a desire to overcome societal rigidity and orthodoxy.

Tutul believes anyone can start practising yoga at any time, describing it as "an ocean full of jewels." He encourages individuals to "pick the jewel for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being to be free from all bondage," emphasising the personalised nature of yoga.

Apart from teaching yoga, Tutul is an avid collector of yoga literature, having amassed hundreds of rare and precious books over the years. Though these books currently reside in a small library at his home, he dreams of one day establishing a yoga library where the knowledge of yoga will be accessible to all.

For now, he focuses on expanding the reach of "Matri Mongol," likening his efforts to planting a seedling: "Spreading the knowledge of yoga is akin to planting a seedling — it provides shelter and healing to all as it grows bigger."

Essentials:

The yoga sessions of Matri Mongol are held every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday morning at Dhanmondi Lake. For more details on how to participate, email: matrimongol@gmail.com

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Ayman Anika