

Yoga Day celebrations at UN to be broadcast at Times Square

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United Nations: The celebrations commemorating the first International Day of Yoga here, to be presided over by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, will be broadcast at Times Square to a global audience.

The UN will commemorate the inaugural International Yoga Day on June 21 with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and General Assembly President Sam Kutesa gracing the occasion.

The India-led celebrations will also feature a special lecture and demonstration by Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

The celebrations at the world body's headquarters would be broadcast to an audience of thousands at Times Square, considered the global crossroads in the heart of Manhattan.

Another celebration of the Solstice Day would be observed at Times Square on June 21 with thousands performing yoga exercises, according to the Indian mission to the UN here.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic address to the Indian-American community from the iconic Madison Square Garden last year was also telecast live on the giant electronic billboards dotting Times Square.

Several Indian-American and other ethnic organisations have joined hands to commemorate the first yoga day here.

Overseas Volunteers for Better India (OVBI) will be organising Yogathon events across 100 US cities and more than 70 organisations have joined the campaign.

The UN General Assembly had last year overwhelmingly adopted a draft resolution, declaring June 21 as International Yoga Day. A record 177 countries had co-sponsored the resolution.

The idea for declaring an International Day of Yoga at the United Nations was formally proposed by Prime Minister Modi in his maiden address to the 69th General Assembly session in September last year.

He had indicated that June 21, one of the two solstices, which is the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere, has special significance in many parts of the world, and could be considered for adoption as the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations each year.

Following Modi's UN address, the Permanent Mission of India had convened three rounds of informal consultations with all 193 member states of the United Nations.

A final text of the Resolution, on which all the participating countries agreed, was reached on October 22.