

## **International Yoga Day aims to make Yoga mantra of modern times: Diplomat**

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**New York:** The first International Day of Yoga aims at making the ancient Indian cultural heritage the "mantra of modern times", India's top diplomat here said as organisations from across the US gear up to host the inaugural day for hundreds of thousands of yoga supporters.

"Our objective is to make yoga the mantra of modern times. (The International Yoga Day) is a recognition that yoga is a civilisational heritage that originated in India,"

India's Consul General here Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay told PTI ahead of the first International Day of Yoga to be commemorated on June 21. Yoga, one of India's most significant cultural contributions to the world, will inundate the US on June 21 when hundreds of thousands of people will mark the day, with

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj presiding over the celebrations at the United Nations and Times Square.

Mulay said a "plethora" of events have been planned across the US and the Indian Consulate in New York is bringing a large number of diverse Indian-American communities and institutions together for celebrating the day.

Swaraj will lead a high-level delegation from June 20-22. Apart from her participation at the UN headquarters on June 21, she is expected to attend the Annual Event of Yoga at Times Square, a lecture and demonstration of Yoga at the Hindu Temple Society of North America and at an event at Lincoln Centre featuring Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Mulay said that an estimated 30,000 people are expected to attend the day-long Yoga celebrations at Times Square and about 6,000 at the talk by the spiritual leader hosted by chairman of the Global Citizen Forum industrialist B K Modi.

"The evening will honour the rich heritage of yoga through dance, music and meditation," Modi said. In addition, the Overseas Volunteers for Better India (OVBI) will be organising 'Yogathons' across 100 cities in the US that will again be attended by thousands of people.

Events have been planned in Washington, Boston, Ohio, New Jersey, San Francisco and other US cities as well by several Yoga studios, Indian-American organisations and temples, Mulay said.

He said the International Day of Yoga "will deepen and broaden the scope, meaning and significance of yoga for the US population and will also make people think about India and its connection with yoga.

"Yoga is an uninterrupted inheritance that has lasted for such a long time. This is an excellent opportunity for us to spread awareness and make Yoga a household name along with its significance," Mulay said.