

## **Australia marks International Yoga Day**

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**Canberra:** Thousands of people across Australia on Sunday took part in the first International Yoga Day celebrations.

The idea of a yoga day was first mooted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a yoga practitioner himself, who spoke about the benefits at the UN general assembly in November last year, ABC reported.

In the capital city of Canberra, Yoga Practitioner Darryl Alexander, conducted a mass yoga session at the East-West Lawns in Old Parliament House. The event was organised by Yoga Mandir institute.

In Sydney, various sessions conducted by several practioners were held in Bondi beach. The event was organised UN World Yoga Day Australia.

Yoga Australia CEO Shyamala Benakovic said yoga was becoming more mainstream in Australia.

"There's been a lot of research and studies showing the benefits of yoga - it's across all age groups, from children to senior ages," she said.

"The major trend is that it is being absorbed into everyday life. So you will see more and more corporations having [yoga programmes]."

Benakovic said yoga's malleability allowed people to work it into their life in any way they want. This has resulted in many variations of yoga, from hot yoga and board yoga to more extreme forms such as nude yoga.

Yoga teacher and former hotelier Bette Calman, 89, attributes her good health to the discipline.

"I have never had a headache or a cold," she said.

Calman said yoga helped her manage the muscle aches she experienced while working in the hotel industry, a result of standing on her feet for hours at a time.

She said she "fell in love" with yoga about 60 years ago and has never stopped practicing since, adding that the shoulder and headstand poses are among her favourites.

- IANS