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Ministry of Tourism

On the occasion of International Yoga Day Ministry of Tourism presents 35th webinar titled 'India as a Yoga Destination' under Dekho Apna Desh webinar series

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To showcase the fruitful benefits about our country's ancient form of health science- Yoga and the potential of it as a tourism product, Ministry of Tourism presented a webinar on 'India as a Yoga Destination' under Dekho Apna Desh webinar series. The webinar on the International Day of Yoga highlighted the current yoga landscape and how it can be leveraged to broad base and scale up tourism in India. Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

The 35th session of the Dekho Apna Desh webinar series on 21st June, 2020 was moderated by Ms. Rupinder Brar, ADG, Ministry of Tourism and was presented by Shri Achal Mehrawho is the CEO of Greenway (a social impact company) and founder of an eco-friendly resort Mahua Vann in Madhya Pradesh. As a Yoga teacher, Achal has been regularly teaching in Mumbai and has also taught at international yoga festival in United Kingdom and Paris, apart from conducting regular Yoga Retreats at his resort in Pench.

Our speaker Shri Achal Mehra, began the session with appreciating the efforts of our honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi who in his United Nations address suggested the date of 21 June to be recognized and celebrated as International Day of Yoga, as it is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and shares a special significance in many parts of the world. Therefore, the first International Day of Yoga is celebrated on 21st June, 2015 and since then our ancient and ancestral gift- Yoga has claimed global recognition. The theme for this year's 'International Day of Yoga is Yoga at home, Yoga with family' considering the adverse effects of pandemic.

According to Achal, Yoga is not just a physical exercise, it is a holistic approach to health and well-being which unveils the full potential of human beings. Yoga has four dimensions to a being that is physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. There are certain misconceptions about the physical dimension of yoga that it is a very gentle exercise and it can't help in reducing body weight and keeping it in shape. These misconceptions are justified by Achal as he states that Yoga tests your

body into three aspects- strength, balance and endurance. One can loose 300gm of his body weight in a session of Surya Namaskar for one hour. The ultimate objective of yoga exercises is to increase the energy levels. For example, Anulom-Vilom performed by contraction and expansion of breadth helps in increasing the energy level of lungs.

Apart from increasing the energy levels, the yoga exercises and postures also helps in keeping the mind quiet and still. India has great mystics of Yoga like Patanjali which has stated some yoga sutras for keeping the mind still and quiet like 'Stirsukham Asana' which means stillness in body posture for a longer time to influence mind. It works behind the scientific principle of whatever happens to the body will also happens to the mind. If the body will be still then the mind will also become still. Another one is 'Anant Sampati Brahma' which means dropping your ego. It states that yoga is not about the physical limits, instead its about breathing in a certain posture for a longer time and deep breadth comes from the quietness of the mind.

Coming to the yoga and wellness experiences in amalgamation to a destination, India has a large reservoir of ancient wisdom like yoga schools and institutes. There are two main branches of yoga schools in our country- Ashtangayoga and Hatha yoga. There are certain famous institutes in Rishikesh, Yoga Dharamshala in Goa, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga in Delhi and many other premier knowledge centres spread across the nation. Apart from the institutes, our country has a lot of potential to provide yoga and wellness experiences. Khajurao, Pondicherry, Rajasthan and Sikkim are few states which are organic and close to culture and nature. Therefore, more yoga institutes and wellness centres should be developed in these locations to boost the wealth of wellness tourism in India.

The benefits of yoga have been realized by the west first and in the present times they have a more organized structure in the wellness field but our country has realized the importance of its own culture of yoga and are working to make this sector more organized. During this pandemic, the technology has given a larger audience for the yoga institutes and trainers to conduct virtual sessions like UN Nations has organized a virtual event for yoga from 15:00hrs-16:00hrs on the occasion of International Day of Yoga. This shows that our ancient wealth is being recognized on international level. So, we as the natives of our country should deep dig into our ancient culture and tradition of Yoga and wellness which could help us in attaining a better health and also in bringing a change in the tourism industry and its products after this pandemic.

The National e-Governance Division (NeGD) created by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has been playing a pivotal role in supporting the Ministry in conducting of the Dekho Apna Desh Webinars by providing technical assistance directly with a professional team thereby ensuring effective citizen engagement and communication with all stakeholders using the digital experience platform.

The sessions of webinars are now available on the https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbzIbBmMvtvH7d6Zo_ZEHDA/featured and also on all social media handles of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

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