

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः  
ऋग्वेद -1.89.

**Let noble thoughts come to us from all directions in the universe.**

Vol. 30, May 2023



*“Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature.”*

These were the words of Honorable PM of India, Shri Narendra Modi while speaking at the UNGA in 2014, calling for the celebration of the International Day of Yoga.

Thanks to his personal initiative, the UN adopted the Resolution 69/131 in 2014 to observe the International Day of Yoga on 21 June every year. That date is also the Summer Solstice, the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere. The Resolution was supported by 177 countries and passed without a vote. Starting 2015, 8 editions of the International Day of Yoga have been observed globally so far.

The universality of celebrations is reflected in the choice of themes which resonate with most of the countries. Like Yoga for Harmony and Peace (2015), Yoga for Health (2017), Yoga for Heart (2019) etc. During the pandemic-affected years of 2020 and 2021, the observance of the International Day of Yoga virtually became a symbol of solidarity. In 2022, a year that saw the beginnings of a conventional military conflict, the theme, aptly, was “Yoga for Humanity”. More than 70 Countries across the world also

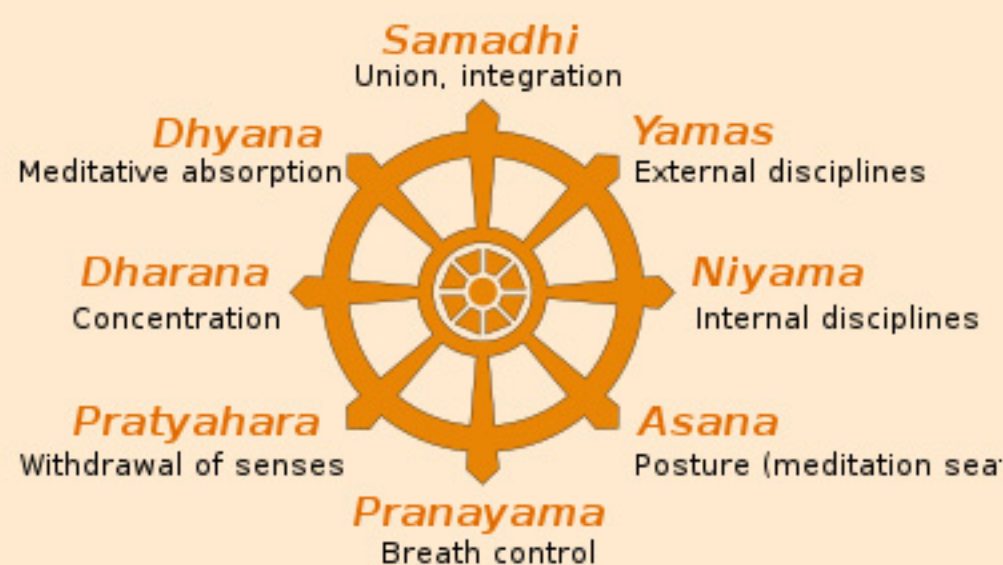


participated in the “Guardian Ring of Yoga”, following the movement of the Sun. This coming together of humanity worldwide highlighted the principle of “**Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam**” or “The World is One Family”. It is the same precept which guides India’s presidency of the G20 this year, with the theme “**One Earth. One Family. One Future.**”

### The Philosophy of Yoga

Yoga is one of the six schools of Indian philosophical thought. The earliest available text on yoga is Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*. Like many of the other texts in the Indian tradition, Patanjali is only said to have compiled the various thoughts that existed for an indeterminate time before him. The root of the word “yoga” in Sanskrit is “yuj”, which means “to unite”. While in popular parlance, yoga is associated with physical *asanas*, breathing techniques and meditation, its actual scope is far beyond the body, reaching out to the metaphysical. It is aimed at achieving the unity and harmony of body & mind; matter (*prakriti*) & spirit (*purusha*). Control of the body and the breath are but mere tools to help one reach farther in the spiritual journey.

There are 8 stages to the practice of Yoga, popularly known as the *Ashtanga*. These are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana & Samadhi.



**A. Yama:** “Yama” are moral imperatives which a practitioner is expected to observe. The Yama are largely restrictive in nature. These are *Ahimsa* / Nonviolence; *Satya* / Truth; *Asteya* / Non-Stealing; *Aparigraha* / Non-Possession; *Brahmacharya* / Chastity or Fidelity. These are also the 5 Vows (Anuvratas) one observes in Jainism.

**B. Niyama:** “Niyama” are prescriptions for a practitioner. The different Niyama are *Shaucha* / Purity (of body, thought, speech); *Santosha* / Contentment; *Tapas* / Persistence & Austerity; *Svadhyaya* / Introspection; *Ishvarapranidhana* / Contemplation of the Ultimate.

**C. Asana:** These are the various postures one practices. The idea is to be able to hold these postures for long, in a steady, comfortable manner.



**E. *Pratyahara*:** This is the stage of turning one's senses away from the external stimuli, towards seeking greater knowledge of the self.

**F. *Dharana*:** The word is derived from a root word, which means to hold. In this stage, a practitioner is expected to focus or concentrate the mind.

**G. *Dhyana*:** In this stage, a practitioner is expected to meditate or contemplate, without being clouded by judgment. It is about becoming conscious of the various thought processes, perceptions and sensations.

**H. *Samadhi*:** This is the ultimate objective of Yoga – to reach harmony and to experience solely the present moment.

The logo of the International Day of Yoga also incorporates the idea of harmony. The orange halo represents the Sun, the ultimate source of all energy on Earth. The blue represents fire (*agni tatva*). Green leaves represent nature while the brown leaves represent earth. The human figure with folded hands is a yogi, unifying the mind & body, man & nature.

Apart from the popular *Ashtanga Yoga*, there are other forms of yoga, all of which focus on striving for unity and harmony between the Man & the Ultimate, between the individual and the Universal. The underlying current in the Indian spiritual tradition is to attain Enlightenment and Liberation (*Moksha*).

One of India's most famous sons, Swami Vivekananda popularized Indian philosophy and spirituality among the global audience. While his iconic address in the 1893 World Parliament of Religions in Chicago is perhaps the most famous, Swami Vivekananda also wrote commentaries on yoga. According to him, an individual could attain Liberation through 4 different schools of yoga.





1. *Karma Yoga*, which is the yoga of selfless action. Performing action, while being non-attached to the outcome is the essence of Karma Yoga.

2. *Bhakti Yoga* is the yoga of purity in love and worship of the Ultimate. Love that is beyond any earthly attachments, directed towards God, is a vehicle for liberation.

3. *Raja Yoga* pertains to seeking knowledge of the Self through meditation and concentration. It is the path of seeking the divine through reason and greater understanding of the self.

4. *Jnana Yoga* also deals with attaining knowledge for the purpose of liberation, of which it considers knowledge of the Self to be paramount.

Across centuries, Yoga has been a successful soft-power export from India, first to East and South-East Asian countries and later to the western world. However, it is necessary to appreciate that this was not undertaken as a concerted campaign, but was driven by the vision of saints and yogis to uphold Indian traditions; to share the knowledge accumulated over generations of seers with the world. Through the efforts of such cultural ambassadors, "yoga and wellness tourism" to India is increasing in popularity every year. Rishikesh in Uttarakhand is famed as the "Yoga Capital of the World". For fans of the Beatles, it was here that the band found its spiritual retreat, which to this day is famous as the "Beatles Ashram." It is said that their sojourn here was one of their most productive periods.





## State Spotlight: UTTARAKHAND

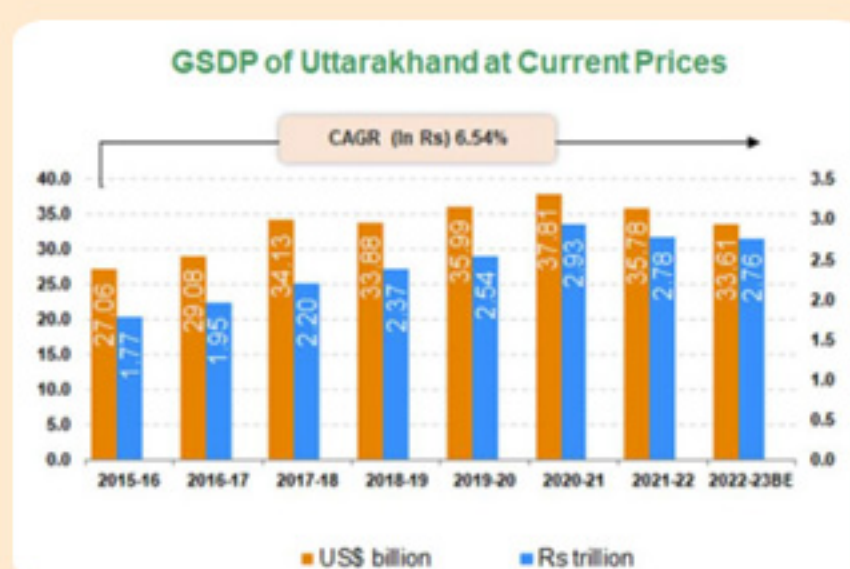
Nestled in the foothills of the majestic Himalayas, "Dev Bhoomi" (Land of the Gods) Uttarakhand is famed for its Hindu pilgrimage sites, national parks and adventure tourism. The Chota Chardham circuit of Gangotri, Yamunotri, Badrinath & Kedarnath is among the most sought after pilgrimage circuits in India. While Gangotri is the source of the holy river Ganga, Haridwar is the place where the Ganga ends her mountainous journey to enter the plains. "Ganga Aarti" in Haridwar is second perhaps only to that in Varanasi and is a spectacle to behold!



Given its geography, Uttarakhand has not received large-scale industrial investment over the years. However, it has smartly marketed itself as a destination for wellness & tourism, a pristine destination for spirituality as well as for film shooting. The state and particularly, Rishikesh, is branded as the "Yoga Capital of the World". Ayurvedic centres, spas, resorts, yoga retreats have emerged in Uttarakhand to build and enhance this brand image. Efforts towards promotion of eco-tourism in Uttarakhand are also underway.



GDP of the state has grown at a CAGR of 6.54% during FY15-23. Uttarakhand has been trying to attract investments, with focus being on food processing, horticulture and floriculture, renewable energy, hospitality, tourism & wellness, film shooting etc. Government of India's Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India have adjudged the state's Investment Promotion Agency as a Top Performer. It is a state that is 100% electrified and has abundant, cheap and clean water and power resources.

Over the last 8-9 years, the state has launched new policies and modified existing ones to attract greater investment. The new MSME policy of 2015, Mega Textile Policy of 2015, Mega Industrial and Investment Policy of 2015 are some key milestones in the state's investor-friendly efforts.






The state of Uttarakhand is also home to several GI-tagged products like the Bhotia Dann, Aipan, Ringal Craft etc.



@tribesindia



## Uttarakhand Bhotia Dann

Bhotiyas are people of presumed Tibetan heritage that live along the Indo-Tibetan border in the upper reaches of the Great Himalayas, at elevations ranging from 6,500 feet (2,000 m) to 13,000 feet (4,000 m). In Uttarakhand, they inhabit seven river valleys, three in the Garhwal division (Jadh, Mana and Niti) and four in the Kumaon division (Johar, Darma, Byans and Chaudans). Their main traditional occupation is Indo-Tibetan trade, with limited amounts of agriculture and pastoralism.

The Bhotiya Dan Carpets are prepared by Bhotiya Tribe in the Indo-Himalayan Region. Sheep rearing in the border districts of Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar has been the main means of livelihood of the Bhotia tribe for years. And this tribe produces a variety of textile products by extracting wool from sheep, in which sweaters, shawls, fans, socks, muffler caps and Bhotia dan i.e. woolen carpets are very famous. And all these products are made purely by hand, so it takes a lot of time and effort to make it, and it is also very effective and expensive.



In this "Visit India Year 2023", Uttarakhand is bound to be a major feature on the Indian tourist map, for it has something to offer for everyone.



For the adventure seekers and nature lovers, Uttarakhand boasts of multiple trekking routes, which allow one to explore the Himalayas. It also has a prominent river rafting scene, thanks to the rapids of the Ganga, Yamuna, Alakananda, Kali etc. Adventures in Uttarakhand are incomplete without a visit to the famous Jim Corbett National Park, to sight the Royal Bengal Tiger, not to mention the majestic Asiatic Elephant, herds of deer etc. Bungee jumping and paragliding are also among the other major adventure offerings in Uttarakhand.





*Image Credits: Uttarakhand Tourism*

Steeped in mythology and legends, Uttarakhand has numerous temples and rivers which may be of interest for the spiritually inclined. The Chardham pilgrimage – Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri – is a prominent fixture for religious and spiritual tourism. Home to the source of the holy river Ganga, Uttarakhand also has the Panchprayag, or the five sites of confluence of rivers which ultimately form the mighty Ganga. Uttarakhand also has a route passing through it for the holy Kailash – Manasa Sarovar Yatra, not to forget Rishikesh & Haridwar.



**BADRINATH** (Image Credits: Uttarakhand Tourism)





KEDARNATH (Image Credits: Uttarakhand Tourism)



GANGOTRI (Image Credits: Uttarakhand Tourism)



YAMOUNOTRI (Image Credits: Uttarakhand Tourism)



## The Month That Was:

### First India-EU Trade and Technology Council



External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of Commerce & Industry (CIM) Shri Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology (MOS), Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, visited Brussels on 15-16 May 2023 to jointly co-chair the first Ministerial meeting of the India – EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) on 16 May. The meeting was co-chaired on the European side by Executive Vice Presidents (EVP), H.E. Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis and H.E. Ms. Margerethe Vestager. The Ministers also had several official and business engagements during their stay in Brussels.



On 15 May, CIM held a bilateral meeting with Executive Vice President Dombrovskis. During the meeting, both sides took stock of the ongoing negotiations for Free Trade Agreement, Investment Protection Agreement and Agreement on Geographical Indications and provided guidance to the respective teams to enable early conclusion of



the agreements. Both sides also discussed cooperation in multilateral platforms including in WTO and agreed to work towards a successful WTO Ministerial Conference. CIM also laid out India's position on the EU's proposed Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and sought the EU's cooperation to address issues and concerns that may arise during the implementation of CBAM.

In the context of the Working Group 3, on trade, investment and resilient value chains of the TTC, CIM along with EVP Dombrovskis chaired a stakeholders meeting in hybrid format. A CII delegation participated from the Indian side. CIM also had an interaction with the members of Federation of Belgian Enterprises (FEB) and highlighted the opportunities for European businesses in India and encouraged them to invest in India. Separately, MOS met with senior officials of Interuniversity Microelectronics Centre (IMEC) Belgium to discuss support from the institute on advancing India Semiconductor Mission.



The three Ministers jointly met H.E. Mr. Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of Belgium. The meeting saw extensive discussions on various issues, including India's ongoing Presidency of G20, the upcoming Belgium Presidency of the Council of European Union, progress in the India-EU FTA negotiations and other regional and global issues of bilateral interest.



The three Ministers jointly met President of European Commission, H.E. Ms. Ursula von der Leyen and had comprehensive discussions on India – EU bilateral issues



covering trade, economy, security, and strategic issues. They agreed to make the TTC a platform to guide the relationship to face new geopolitical challenges and derisk the global economy. They discussed the need to work together for successful conclusion of India's G-20 Presidency.

On 16 May, EAM, CIM and MOS along with EVP Vestager jointly co-chaired a stakeholder interaction on Technology and Clean Energy industry which had participation from leading businesses of India and Europe in this domain including C-DOT, NPCI, Nokia, Infineon, NXP, Tata Consultancy Services and NASSCOM.



The three Ministers held a working luncheon meeting with H.E. Mr. Josep Borell, High Representative and Vice President (HRVP) of the European Commission. They discussed the importance of India – EU Strategic Partnership in the evolving global situation. EAM also held comprehensive discussions met with HRVP on global, regional and strategic issues. CIM met with H.E. Mr. Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for Internal Markets where e-commerce related policies and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform of India was discussed.

The Ministers co-chaired the first Ministerial meeting of India – EU TTC meeting. The India-EU TTC was set up pursuant to a decision taken in the meeting between PM Narendra Modi and President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen in April 2022. The TTC aims to provide political leadership and ensure strategic focus in the partnership. It will enable both sides to respond to contemporary developments, encourage resilient and reliable supply chains and promote digital trust and transparency. The Ministers reviewed the progress in the three Working Groups of TTC and provided guidance on their future course.

In the TTC meeting, both sides had in-depth discussions on a range of issues including semiconductors, high performance computing, digital public infrastructures, clean energy technologies and supply chain resilience. The Ministers also exchanged views on strategic issues of significance like economic security and promoting connectivity projects in third geographies, including agreeing to identify projects for joint implementation.

Both sides agreed to hold the next meeting of the TTC in India at an early date.



## The Month That Was:

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Diplomatic Tour



In May, PM Shri Narendra Modi embarked on a significant diplomatic tour to Hiroshima, Japan, to attend the G7 Summit, followed by a historic visit to Papua New Guinea and Australia. The Prime Minister was invited by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan, to participate in the G7 Summit as India held the G20 Presidency this year. This summit provided a valuable platform for exchanging views on global challenges and exploring collective solutions.



During the G7 Summit, PM Modi engaged in multiple bilateral meetings with key leaders, further enhancing India's diplomatic ties. PM Modi also participated on 20 May 2023 in the third in-person Quad Leaders' Summit, along with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan and President Joseph Biden of the United States of America.





The Leaders had a productive dialogue about developments in the Indo-Pacific which affirmed their shared democratic values and strategic interests. Guided by their vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, they reiterated the importance of upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of disputes. In this context, they released the Quad Leaders' Vision Statement – Enduring Partners for the Indo-Pacific” which articulates their principled approach.



From Japan, the Prime Minister traveled to Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, marking his first visit to the country. He hosted the 3rd Summit of the Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III Summit) jointly with Prime Minister James Marape of Papua New Guinea. The presence of all 14 Pacific Island Countries (PIC) at the summit underscored the importance of addressing shared concerns, including climate change, sustainable development, capacity building, health, infrastructure, and economic growth.





Concluding the tour, the Prime Minister traveled to Sydney, Australia, at the invitation of Prime Minister Albanese. The bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Albanese provided an opportunity to review the progress of the India-Australia relationship since the successful India-Australia Annual Summit in New Delhi earlier this year. The Prime Minister engaged with Australian CEOs and business leaders, highlighting the potential for economic cooperation, and met the Indian community in Sydney during a special event.

This diplomatic tour underscored India's commitment to global cooperation, regional engagement, and advancing bilateral relations with key nations. PM Modi aimed to contribute to meaningful discussions, foster mutual understanding, and strengthen partnerships for shared prosperity.

### **The Month That Was:**

#### **SCO Summit under India's Chairmanship**





India assumed the rotating Chairmanship of SCO at the Samarkand Summit on 16 September 2022. Under India's first-ever Chairmanship, the 23rd Summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in the virtual format on 4 July 2023, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

All the SCO Member States, viz. China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, have been invited to attend the Summit. In addition, Iran, Belarus and Mongolia have been invited as Observer States. As per SCO tradition, Turkmenistan has also been invited as the guest of the Chair. Heads of the two SCO Bodies – the Secretariat and the SCO RATS - will also be present. Further, Heads of six international and regional organizations have also been invited, viz. UN, ASEAN, CIS, CSTO, EAEU and CICA.

The theme of the Summit is 'Towards a SECURE SCO'. The SECURE acronym was coined by the Prime Minister at the 2018 SCO Summit and stands for Security; Economy and Trade; Connectivity; Unity; Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity; and Environment. These themes have been highlighted during our Chairmanship of SCO.

India has set up new pillars of cooperation under its Chairmanship - Startups and Innovation; Traditional Medicine; Digital Inclusion; Youth Empowerment; and Shared Buddhist Heritage. In addition, India has worked towards fostering greater people to people ties that celebrate the historical and civilizational bonds between our nations. These include the various socio-cultural events hosted by Varanasi under the framework of the first-ever SCO Cultural and Tourist Capital for 2022-23.

India's Chairmanship of SCO has been a period of intense activity and mutually beneficial cooperation between Member States. India has hosted a total of 134 meetings and events, including 14 Ministerial-level meetings. India remains committed to play a positive and constructive role in the organization, and looks forward to a successful SCO Summit as the culmination of its Chairmanship.





## From the Ambassador's Desk

Ambassador Santosh Jha met with Marc Lemaître, the EU Director-General for Research and Innovation, to discuss collaboration between India and the EU in clean and green technology, joint research and innovation, and standards. The meeting aimed to prepare for the upcoming India-EU Technology and Trade Center (TTC) meeting.



Ambassador had the privilege of addressing a group of bright young students from Amity Group of Schools who were embarking on a study visit to Europe. During the session, the Ambassador engaged in an interactive dialogue, answering diverse questions on topics such as diplomacy, India-Belgium relations, cultural diversity, stress management, and achieving work-life balance.



Ambassador and Mr. Sharad Sharma, Co-founder of iSPIRT Foundation, had a constructive meeting with MEP Dragoș Tudorache at the European Parliament in Brussels. The discussion revolved around exploring extensive opportunities for India-EU collaboration in the digital sector, particularly emphasizing digital payment systems, data modeling, and artificial intelligence. The meeting aimed to foster closer ties and



facilitate knowledge exchange in these critical areas of technological advancement between India and the European Union.



Renowned spiritual leader Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar delivered an inspiring address at the Embassy, highlighting the transformative power of yoga and meditation in fostering purity of heart, clarity of mind, and sincerity in action. Emphasizing their universal appeal, he underscored how these practices transcend boundaries, uniting humanity and promoting physical and mental well-being. This event celebrated the International Day of Yoga 2023, emphasizing the profound impact of yoga in promoting peace, happiness, and holistic health.





Ambassador had the honour of inaugurating the highly anticipated 8th edition of the Antwerp Indian Premier League (AIPL), a prestigious event organised by the esteemed Antwerp Indian Association. The occasion marked a celebration of the spirit of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and showcased the vibrant Indian culture.



Copyright © 2023 Embassy of India Brussels, All rights reserved.