**Consulate General of India**

**Chicago**

**Press Release**

**International Yoga Day - kick-off ceremony**

The kick off ceremony of the First International Yoga Day was organized at the premise of the Indian Consulate on 20th May,2015. Different community organizations, established yoga and spiritual centres and the Media were invited to participate in the event.

During the kick-off ceremony, Dr. Ausaf Sayeed, Consul General, briefed on various activities proposed to be held by the Indian Consulate in collaboration with the participating organizations to commemorate the First International Day of Yoga [IYD] on June 21, 2015.

The Consul General briefed that UN General Assembly [UNGA] had adopted an Indian-led Resolution on December 11, 2014 declaring June 21 each year as the “International Day of Yoga”. This was an outcome of the proposal made by India’s Prime Minister Hon’ble Narendra Modi during his address to the 69th [UN General Assembly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UN_General_Assembly) on September 27, 2014. Several cities all over the World, including the United States of America, have supported the idea of commemorating the First International Day of Yoga [IYD] in a befitting manner on June 21, 2015.

During his introductory remarks, the Consul General introduced the Organizing Committee and participating organizations which include Art of living Foundation, Gayathri Gyan Mandir, Isha Foundation, Brahma Kumaris Meditation Certres, SEWA International, Eye on India, Science of Spirituality, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, Cognizant and several community organisations.

The Consul General briefed that the official celebration of the First International Yoga Day in Chicagoland will take place on 21st June, between 10:30 AM to 04:00 PM. The venue will be notified later. The Indian Consulate has planned the following activities for the celebration:

[i] ***Book Exhibition*** : A special book exhibition on Yoga will be exhibited on the occasion.

[ii] ***Photo exhibition***: Selected photographs on Yoga by Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga [MDNIY] and by Raja Choudhury will be displayed

[iii] ***Screening of the documentary film “History of Yoga: the path of my Ancestors”*** : This is a 109 minutes film with Hindi subtitles. The film is a 6000 year journey into the origin & evolution of Yoga. The film explores the elements of Yoga in the Harappa civilization, Vedic times, Jainism, Buddhism and the Hath-Yogic practices of medieval times.

The Consul General appreciated the efforts of the participating organizations which are actively involved in the promotion and propagation of Yoga in the Chicagoland. The activities to be performed by these organizations on the First International Yoga Day are as follows:

* *Common Yoga Protocol* / demonstration of common asanas for 30 minutes and Breathing Techniques by Art of Living Foundation.
* *Surya Namaskar by Hindu Swayam Sevak Sangh*
* *Meditation Workshop by Brahm Kumaris Meditation Centres*
* *Lecture & presentation by BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha*
* *Meditation for optimal Wellbeing by Science of Spirituality*
* *Skit by Isha Foundation*
* *Yoga related activities by various other organizations*

The Consul General briefed that Eye on India will also celebrate the First International Yoga Day in befitting manner from sunrise to sundown. The morning session will take place at 63rd Street Beach, 6300 S. Lake Shore Drive from 5: 30 AM to 08:00AM, Daley Plaza at 10:00 AM to 02:00PM and at Mozart Park from 4:00PM to 08:00 PM.

The Consul General briefed that AYUSH initiated a design competition via their website for logo and tagline for IDY. A committee headed by Dr. HR Nagendra, Chancellor, Swami Vivikanand Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (S-VYASA) University chose the Logo which was approved by the Hon’ble Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs.

The Consul General briefed that Tech Mahindra has developed a website: [www.idayofyoga.org](http://www.idayofyoga.org) to support the whole cause of the International Day of Yoga. The objective of the website is to provide impetus to Yoga in general and to the International Day of Yoga in particular. The website has multiple features and has been designed to cater to a diverse audience. The website consolidates yoga related contents in the form of text, images, videos, blogs, news articles, opinion etc. from the most authentic sources.

The Consul General & the members of organizing Committee unveiled the official logo for the International Day of Yoga during kick-off ceremony.

The Consul General concluded the kick-off ceremony and urged all for optimum support in celebrating the First International Day of Yoga in a befitting manner & at a large scale not only in Chicagoland but in the entire US Midwest.