

Remarks delivered by Ms. Kiva Clarke, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.) on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on the occasion of the 12th International Day of Yoga, Sunday, June 21, 2026, Ato Boldon Stadium, Couva

Namaste...

It is indeed a pleasure to join you today to bring greetings on behalf of the Honourable Sean Sobers, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, as we celebrate along with you, your Excellency Dr. Pradeep Rajpurohit, High Commissioner of India to Trinidad and Tobago, the *12th International Day of Yoga*.

Recognising that we are in the rainy season, I am heartened to see that the weather has cooperated and not dampened the spirit of you enthusiastic yogis.

This landmark day which was established by the United Nations in 2014, could not have happened without the initiative of India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the grand architect, who promoted the physical, mental, and spiritual benefits of yoga.

The popularity of yoga around the globe, including in Trinidad and Tobago, is well-known. The famous saying “*prevention is better than cure*”, springs to mind and it is my belief that yoga can play a vital role in promoting a holistic approach to building resilience and good health.

Our gathering, occasioned by the celebration of a day, specially dedicated to the promotion of the triad wellness of **body, mind** and **spirit**, should *not* be viewed *merely* as an impetus for us to address health challenges **only** when faced during the course of our lives but, as recognition that, a balanced way of life is instrumental for all of us to commune and be in harmony with nature.

The overall benefits of yoga are undeniable. Yoga assists in the management of anxiety and stress, the improvement of physical and cardio-respiratory fitness. Yoga enables people to engage in life-long exercise, pain-management, protect against physical frailty and cognitive decline.

The theme of this year's observance is ***“Yoga for Healthy Ageing”***, which in his letter commemorating the 12th International Day of Yoga, Prime Minister Modi wrote, ***“As people across the world aspire to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives, ensuring healthy and dignified ageing has become a shared global priority”***.

This is especially important for Trinidad and Tobago, as the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), notes that while people over the age of 65 accounted for 12.4 percent of Trinidad and Tobago's population in 2024, sadly, over 60 percent of deaths are caused by Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) with three-quarters occurring in people under the age of 70.

Therefore, as we recognise that our population is ageing, it is vital that we ensure that nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, 65 and over, live healthy lifestyles and maintain good mental health.

We can therefore focus on the role that yoga plays in enhancing the health and well-being of people of all ages, particularly in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle as the years advance.

Further, the Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago suggests that the practice of yoga can help people to live healthier lifestyles and may potentially reduce more health issues, including the prevalence of NCDs in our society.

Your Excellency, in closing, I wish to reiterate my heartfelt thanks for our invitation to this event and extend congratulations for the High Commission's work in ensuring that this special day is commemorated with a view to promoting yoga throughout Trinidad and Tobago.

Happy International Day of Yoga. Happy Father's Day

Dhanyavad