

Bengal to host events on June 21

Calcutta set for Modi's Yoga Day

**SNEHAMOY
CHAKRABORTY**

Calcutta: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to lead the International Yoga Day events in Calcutta on June 21, and the Bengal government has directed district administrations and departments to ensure the participation of people from all walks of society in the celebrations.

"The 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026 will be observed on the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', Kolkata, West Bengal, has been selected as the venue for the National Celebration of IDY 2026, which will be graced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, along with the Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal and other distinguished dignitaries," an order issued by chief secretary Manoj Agarwal to all departmental secretaries and district magistrates said on Friday.

The order asked different departments to organise awareness programmes and camps from Darjeeling to the Sundarbans. Yoga sessions will be held in remote corners of the state, from the district level to the block level. Special programmes will be organised along the Ganga corridors, in tea gardens, and at heritage sites across Bengal.

A source in the state government said that in the past 11 years, the observance of International Yoga Day had become a farce in Bengal because the previous Trinamool Congress dispensation had



Narendra Modi takes part in a yoga session. File picture

not wanted to promote it. The source said ₹33 crore in national AYUSH mission funds provided to the Bengal government from 2014 to 2024 had to be returned, and a lot of money was misused during the Trinamool regime.

Those involved in Yoga and AYUSH practices said they expected a rise in the adoption of Yoga across the state through the robust initiatives, which they claimed were not implemented properly during the Trinamool regime. They alleged that Yoga and AYUSH-related initiatives were sidelined by the erstwhile government despite the Union government having sanctioned substantial funds for such programmes.

"We are very happy that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will observe the national event in Calcutta for the first time. On this occasion, Yoga will reach the grassroots level across the entire state. We expect rural youth and people from different walks of life to show greater interest and become involved in the traditional practice of maintaining good health through regular Yoga," said

Sumit Sur, state president of the Akhil Bharatiya Ayurveda Mahasammelan.

Chief minister Suwendu Adhikari has announced that AYUSH will have a separate department, which is currently under the health department.

A source said the Prime Minister's IDY programme was scheduled to be held on the Brigade Parade Ground on June 21, and Suwendu, governor R.N. Ravi, and several senior ministers are likely to participate in it. However, the government will keep the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre ready as an alternative venue in case of heavy rainfall during the monsoon.

The state government has directed departments to plan thematic Yoga events involving people from different sectors, including government employees, tea garden workers, healthcare workers, tribal communities, and representatives of urban and rural local bodies.

A source said Modi was likely to arrive in Calcutta on June 20 to attend a rally at Tarakeshwar in Hooghly on the occasion of Paschim Banga Dibas, the Foundation Day of Bengal, which the new BJP government shifted to June 20 from the earlier Poila Baisakh.

The source added that Modi was also scheduled to visit Bengal during Durga Puja and offer *anjali* on the occasion of Maha Ashtami, which falls on October 19 this year.