

## HC's Speech at 5<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga 15 June 2019

Hon. Ministers,  
Esteemed Participants from the Armed Forces of Sri Lanka  
Yoga and fitness enthusiasts,  
Dear friends,

I am happy to welcome all of you today to the celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Day of Yoga. International Day of Yoga has now become part of the global calendar. It is celebrated in almost all world capitals. Yoga has become a unifying force. Yoga infact literally means to unite. People all over the world have been able to relate to yoga, have recognized its immense benefits, and have made yoga a part of their routine, part of their everyday life.

2. There was a time when yoga was confined to the realm of sages in the Himalayas. That wealth of knowledge is now fortunately available to the common man. We believe that knowledge cannot be a prerogative of a few, it has to percolate and empower the man on the street. Our efforts are therefore to make yoga a global mass movement.

3. Yogasutra compiled by ancient Indian sage Patanjali, is considered the most important text on yoga. Many experts have commented that there is a strong connection between Yogasutra and Buddhist philosophy. The levels of samādhi mentioned in Yogasutra resemble the *Buddhist jnana or Dhyana*. In both the systems, the origin of human suffering is ignorance, lack of knowledge. Yoga is an important pillar of the shared common heritage between our two great nations.

4. This year we started our yoga celebrations, with the blessings of the Most Venerable Mahanayake and Anunayake Thero of Kelaniya Temple. We are also overwhelmed to see the enthusiastic response to our yoga challenge in our social media. Yoga can play a significant role in bringing peace in these difficult times. We hope to continue to spread the message

of peace and harmony with the help of the eminent yoga instructors from Sri Lanka who are here with us today.

5. We have a special relationship with Sri Lanka. After the dastardly Easter Sunday attacks, it was the Prime Minister of India who was the first foreign leader to visit Sri Lanka, to express solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka. It was a reflection of our belief in the resilience of Sri Lanka, that Sri Lanka will rise, and rise again in all its glory.

My friends,

6. We must be cautious of the forces that are trying to divide us. If Yoga teaches us to be one, Jihadi terrorism is telling us exactly the opposite, that we are not one. This jihadi ideology is a common threat to all of us. We must cleanse the minds of the people of these divisive ideologies. It is time that we strengthen the forces that unite us. United we stand, divided we fall.

7. As a wise man once said, "*inhale the future, exhale the past. Just breathe...*" Afterall, life is just a breathe.

Thank You..

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