

Ambassador's Speech at Inauguration of Centre for Indian Music and Dance at Nazarbayev University and Launch of Yoga and Kathak Dance Classes

Ms. Kadisha Dairova, Vice President for Students Affairs and International Cooperation, Mr. Arman Zhumazhanov, Head of Department of International Cooperation, Mr. Yelzhan Kemenov, Director (Sports Centre) distinguished guests and dear friends,

I am delighted to be here on the occasion of inauguration of the Centre for Indian Music and Dance at the Nazarbayev University.

As you all know, Mr. Narendra Modi, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India visited Kazakhstan few months ago. He was deeply impressed by the socio-economic progress made by Kazakhstan, the beauty and splendor of the city of Astana and the high standards of education achieved by the Nazarbayev University in the short span of five years.

He gave an address on his vision of India's relations with Central Asia at the Nazarbayev University, which was very well received in all Central Asian countries. In his address, he noted the deep historical and cultural linkages between India and central Asia. Later, he saw a scintillating performance of Indian music and classical dance at the lunch hosted in his honour by President Nazarbayev.

In his subsequent discussions with President Nazarbayev, the two leaders shared a keen desire to deepen cooperation in all areas that can bring people, especially the youth in closer contacts. Taking into account a keen interest in Indian culture, music and dance among the youth in Kazakhstan, he offered to support the establishment of a Centre for Indian Music and Dance at the Nazarbayev University.

I wholeheartedly thank Nazarbayev University for welcoming and supporting the idea. I am immensely pleased that today we are fulfilling the offer made by the Prime Minister by inaugurating the Centre for Indian Music and Dance at the University with the launch of Yoga and Kathak dance classes. The University has already allocated a temporary space for the Centre and I hope that a permanent space will be allocated in the coming years.

To begin with, there will be three yoga and two Kathak dance classes every week. Yoga is an ancient Indian practice and way of life. It combines elements of physical training, breathing control and meditation to bring about unity of mind and body that enables a person to lead a healthier life and removes obstacles that block our path from realizing the unshakable presence of peace, awareness and joy within. It promotes flexibility and suppleness, strength, stamina, tones the internal organs of our body and makes mind calmer and more controlled and improves concentration. Yoga can help a whole range of ailments including asthma, high blood pressure, lower back pain, arthritis, stress, anxiety and depression. I have brought some books, which will help students to learn more about Yoga.

Kathak dance is one of the eight forms of Indian classical dance that originated about 2500 years ago. The word Kathak is derived from Katha meaning "a story" and hence the word Kathak means a storyteller. With the advent of the Mughal rule in India, it was transformed from a temple dance to a court dance. Its poses are dynamic and have a continuous flow of movements. Equal stress is laid on intricate footwork and facial expression. The dance is performed by both male and female.

Dr. Brijesh Gupta, yoga instructor will demonstrate some yoga postures and Ms. Chandrani Ojah, Kathak dance teacher will perform a Kathak dance sequence. This will be followed by a flute recital by Mr. Bhaskar Ojah. Mr. Ojah is a master of many musical instruments including Tabla and flute and classical music.

I hope you will enjoy the performance. I invite all of you to join Yoga and Kathak dance classes at the Centre. If there would be interest, we would be happy to offer music classes by Mr. Bhaskar Ojha.

I thank Ms. Dairova, Mr. Arman and Mr. Kemenov for all their efforts in establishing the Centre and organizing today's function.

Thank You,
