



## IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

### Usha initiates move to include Yoga in Asian Games programme

**New Delhi, June 26:** Indian Olympic Association President Dr. PT Usha today made a strong pitch for the inclusion of Yoga in the Asian Games programme. In an impassioned letter to Olympic Council of Asia President Raja Randhir Singh, she urged the Asian sports community to include the ancient Indian discipline that fosters physical and mental health.

Dr. Usha said the world had embraced Yoga, thanks to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision. "The world celebrated the 10th International Day of Yoga on June 21, and the response to its universal appeal has been overwhelming," she said. "People across nations have embraced Yoga and drawn benefits."

She said it was important for India to lead the efforts to have Yoga included in the biggest celebrations of sport. "I am confident that as the spiritual home of Yoga and as Vishwaguru, India can campaign for the inclusion of the sport in the Asian Games and eventually the Olympic Games as well," she said.

She drew attention to the fact that the renowned Louvre Museum in Paris will offer visitors the chance to take part in yoga sessions with instructors ahead of the Olympics next month. "It is heartening that the Louvre is welcoming Yoga. It is our responsibility to make the sport gain recognition by getting it included in the Asian Games and Olympic Games," she said.

The IOA President said Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya was very encouraging and appreciative of the idea to make a case for Yoga in the Asian Games. "He told me that he sees the inclusion in the Asian Games would be the first step in taking the sport to the Olympics. We need our indigenous sport to be on such platforms," Dr. Usha said.

"Yoga as a sport can be a very attractive proposition for broadcasters," she said. "Yoga has been a part of the Khelo India Games. Seeing its success, the National Games organisers in Goa included Yoga, including Mallakhambh and Yogasanas, as part of the programme. I am sure that the Olympic Council of Asia will find good reason to accept my proposal."

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