

'YOGA IS A TOOL, NOT A BELIEF'

Sunday's session on Chennai's YMCA ground, during the International Day of Yoga, saw many 'lubricating' their joints, under the guidance of yoga guru Jaggi Vasudev, who called the exercise 'inner engineering' and compared it to a screw driver. The practise of yoga will never clash with religion since it's a science, wherein one doesn't have to believe in anything for it to work, said the master

Express News Service

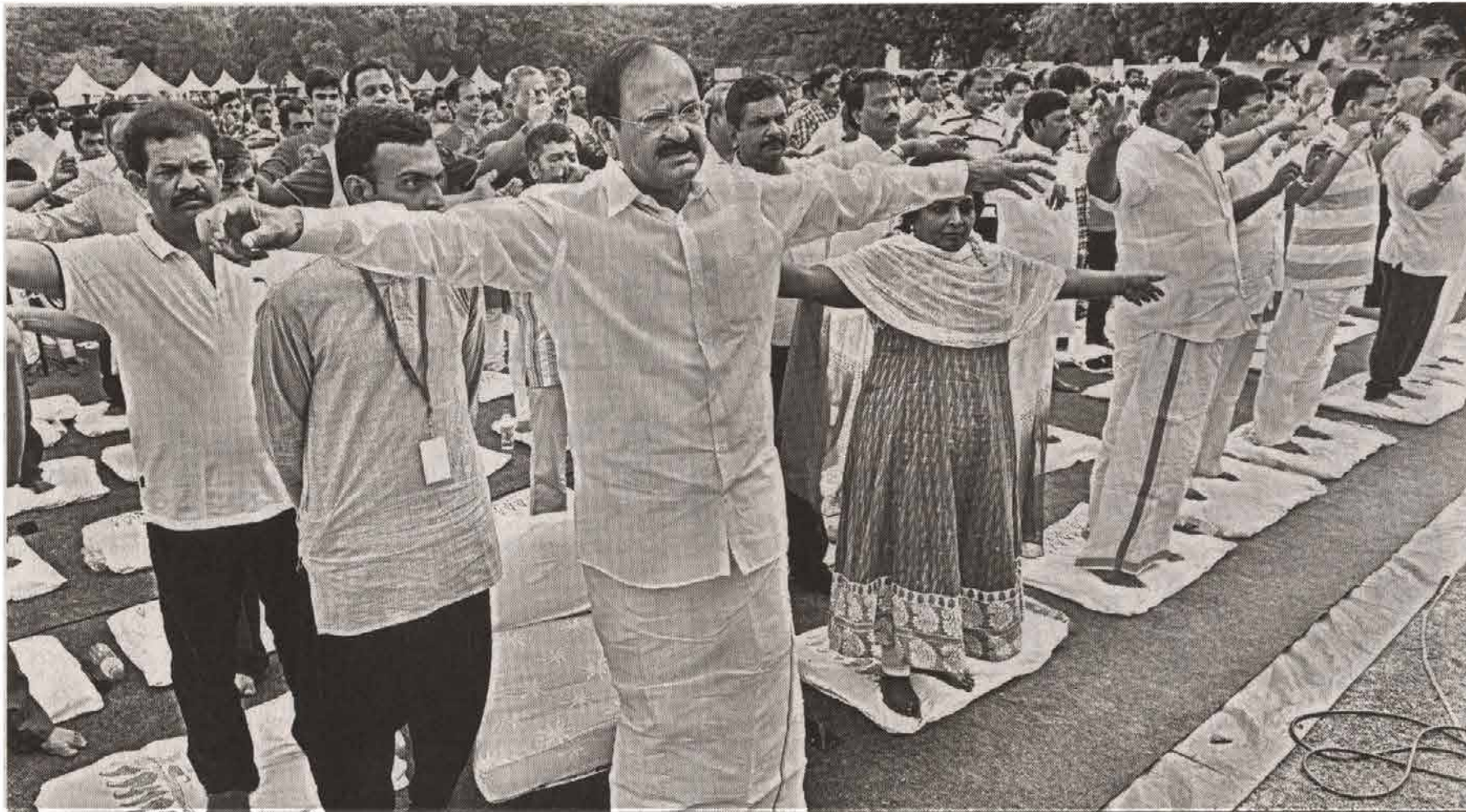
Yoga is technology, it is inner-engineering. It does not have any religion and is not associated with any belief, said yoga guru Jaggi Vasudev to thousands of people at the football ground at YMCA on Sunday. On the first International Day of Yoga, Vasudev, while introducing the participants to preliminary yoga exercises, emphasised its universal appeal.

He said that practising yoga would not clash with their religion because, "it is a science, a technology — you don't have to believe in anything for it to work. As long as you know how to use it, you're set. To say that yoga is a Hindu practice is to say that gravity is a Christian or a Jewish practice."

Participants, who included many popular personalities in the city, were taught simple movements to "lubricate" their joints. He said the movements were 'upa yoga', a preparatory for the actual practice of *asanas*.

He compared yoga to a screw driver, and said it was just a tool. "If I ask you to remove a screw from a chair without a screw driver, you may even break your teeth trying to get the screw out, but the screw will remain in the chair. Similarly, yoga is just a tool. We call it inner-engineering," he said. While much of Vasudev's emphasis was on the universality of yoga, Union Minister Venkaiah Naidu said that as an Indian, he was happy that our country's tradition was being accepted across the globe.

"During our younger days, we were all trained by the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh). The yoga training that I underwent in my younger days still gives me energy," he said. He said that among 177 countries celebrating International Day of Yoga, 41 were Muslim countries. Vasudev said that the International Yoga Day was just a reminder for people that they must practise yoga. He said he wants to give school children a "taste" of yoga in Tamil Nadu, so that "if life hits them on the head tomorrow, they will turn to yoga, not to the bottle or drugs."



M Venkaiah Naidu, minister of Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs practising yoga on the International Day of Yoga celebration organised by Isha Foundation in Chennai on Sunday | A RAJA CHIDAMBARAM

DOS AND DON'TS

The best time to practise yoga is in the morning, before breakfast

You should ideally wait for at least 30 minutes to have a bath after a session

Practise yoga by spreading a blanket or a carpet on a level floor

Don't practise yoga in a place with a lot of smoke. A quiet and clean place with fresh air would be ideal

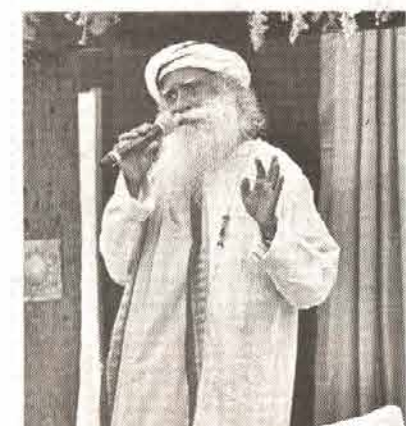
Don't practise yoga under direct sunlight. Avoid cold atmosphere

Throughout the yoga practise, try to be aware of what you are doing

Never force yourself to do something or strain yourself. Relax briefly between each asana

Always breathe through the nose, unless specified otherwise

Avoid practising yoga when unwell, after surgery or if you have fractures or sprains. Resume practise only after consulting a teacher



Founder of ISHA Foundation, Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev, addressing participants at the YMCA Grounds in Chennai on Sunday | EXPRESS