

# A NIGHT THAT LIT UP THOUSAND MINDS

Nightlong Cultural Extravaganza Marks Mahashivaratri Celebrations At Isha Yoga Centre

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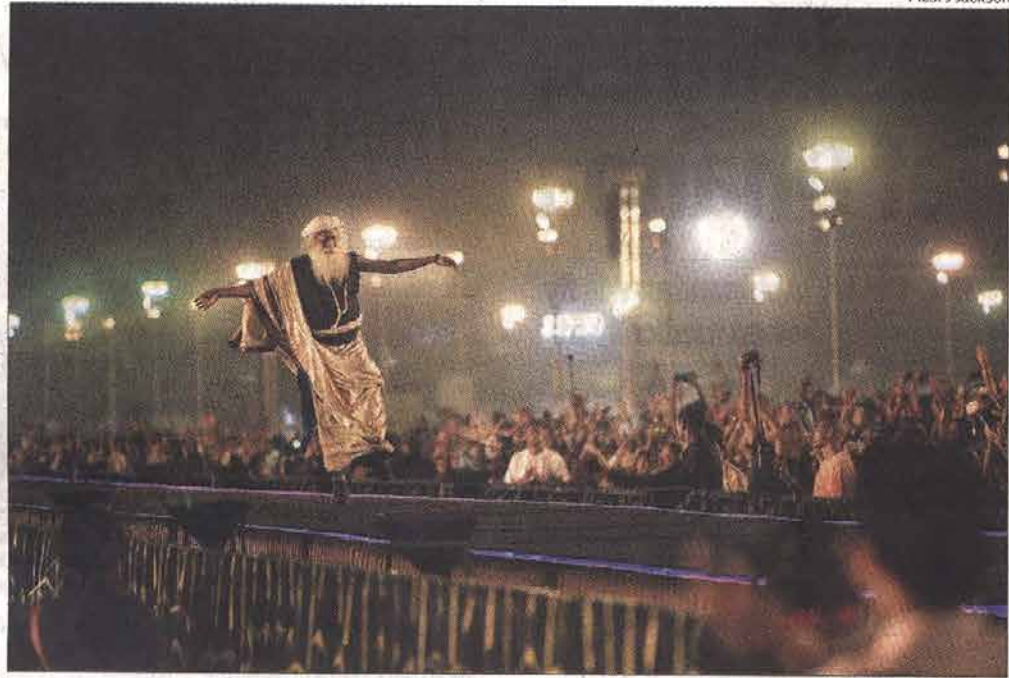
**T**he Velliangiri hills reverberated with drum beats on a pleasant Monday evening as drummers warmed up for a night-long performance of music and dance at the Isha Yoga Centre to usher in Mahashivaratri.

The festivities started with 'bhairavi yatra', a choreographed procession of Linga Bhairavi, accompanied by drum beats and music of pipes. And it set the tone for the ensuing revelry.

President Ram Nath Kovind then arrived on the stage, which was fully illuminated, in front of the 112-ft bust of Adiyogi and planted a tree at the venue in memory of the CRPF personnel who lost their lives in the terrorist attack at Pulwama last month.

## TRADITION MEETS MODERNITY

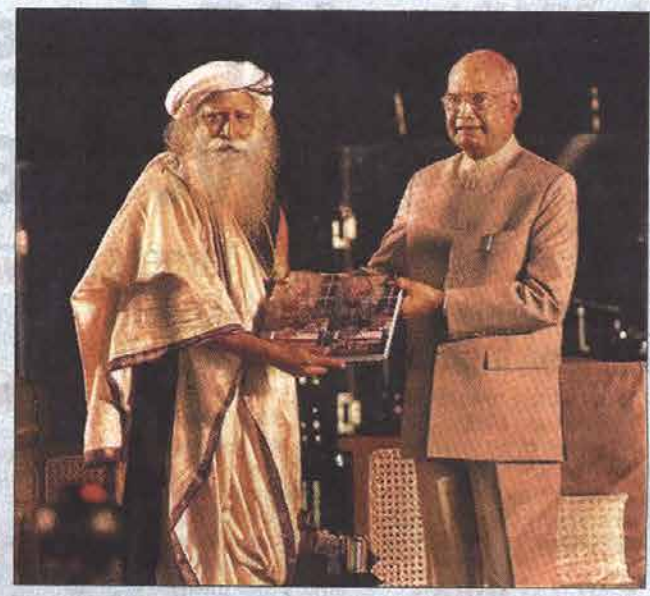
Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, who shared the stage with the President, said the nation's border has been witnessing painful events of late. "There are problems at the border on a daily basis. Young men are dying there. These are problems we have endured



Pics: J Jackson



**ENERGISING THE SOUL:** Moving people from religion to responsibility and turning their 'gaze inwards' is the only way to save the world from an ecological disaster, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev said as he ushered in Mahashivaratri at the Isha Yoga Centre at Velliangiri near the city on Monday. A nightlong cultural extravaganza followed



## EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN BACKED BY OUR CULTURAL ETHOS: PREZ

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**W**hile there are calls for women's empowerment, our cultural ethos has emphasized it through the Ardhanariswara form of Shiva, said president Ram Nath Kovind on Monday. He was speaking at the 25th Mahashivaratri Celebrations at the Isha Yoga Centre in Velliangiri near the city.

"Lord Shiva has many forms, Ardhanariswara is one of them. It indicates that the masculine and feminine aspects should be balanced in a human personality and society," he said.

The President also drew a parallel to the mythology of Lord Shiva to say that a worthy life was one lived in service of others. Quoting a verse of Hindi poet Mythili Sharan Gupt, he said normal people live honest lives, deprived people live by snatching from others, the gods live with the best of everything. But lord Shiva takes the poison of negativity, grief and sorrow in the world upon himself, he said. "Lord Shiva took the poison that came during the churning of the cele-

tial ocean. The basic interpretation of this is that a worthy life is one that is lived in service of others," he said.

Kovind said his visit to the Velliangiri hills also held a personal connection to him. "In 2006, I visited Kailash Manasarovar. They call Velliangiri hills as the Kailasha of the south. I feel that personally a spiritual circle is complete for me as I am in the Kailasha of the south today. I got the same experience as I got when I was in Kailash," he said.

He said when he visited Mi Son Temple in Vietnam, he saw how Indian culture had influenced the culture of Vietnam. He said the Indian culture had also influenced the cultures of Afghanistan, China and Japan.

Noting that a lot of youngsters have taken up practicing yoga, he said Indian youth would play a crucial role in shaping the future of not only India, but the whole humanity.

Governor of Tamil Nadu Banwarilal Purohit, Union minister for railways Piyush Goyal and state ministers S P Velumani and Dindigul Sreenivasan were present at the event.

and even nurtured for the past 70 years. To make a nation, we need to make great human beings." He said the world was in a state of ecological disaster now, due to the mindless perusal of progress. "Moving people from religion to responsibility and turning their 'gaze inwards' is the only solution."

Ram Nath Kovind, meanwhile, inaugurated the Adi Yogi Divya Darshan. The light and sound show was the showstopper of the evening. The spectacle, in which the bust of Adiyogi at the foothills of Velliangiri was lit up with colourful lights, was complete with a narration of how lord Shiva as Adiyogi unveiled the essence of yoga.

This was followed by nightlong cultural extravaganza, which comprised dance performances by Dhaksha Seth Dance Company and music by the Manganiyars.

The event also featured music performances by Amit Trivedi and band. Singers Hariharan and Karthik performed along with Isha Yoga Centre's music band, Sounds of Isha. The cultural programmes were paused at midnight for a meditation session, but only to continue later.

