



17-Jan-2019

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### **Isha celebrates Pongal in collaboration with Tamil Nadu tourism**

*Sadhguru speaks to media about the importance of native cattle breeds*

**16 January 2019, Coimbatore:** This year Isha celebrated Tamizhar Thirunaal - Pongal in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Tourism on 16 January 2019 in the presence of Adiyogi. In an event that erased geographic, religious and cultural boundaries, thousands of people from around the world came together to embrace Pongal and its accompanying tradition with boiling rice pots, sugarcane, rangoli, traditional games and folk performances.

To mark the occasion of Mattu Pongal, when farm animals are celebrated and worshipped in gratitude for the harvest, 16 varieties of native cattle bred at Isha Maatu Manne' stood proudly in their stalls enjoying the attention from visitors. They included Kangeyam, Ongole, Red Sindhi, Hallikkar, Gir, Tharparkkar, Vechur, Rathi, Kankarej and Sahival among other breeds.

Addressing the media before the cultural event, Sadhguru said the only way to enrich the soil is to have the needed country cows, adding that in the past 40-50 years we have started using foreign breeds for the sake milk quantity forgetting the significance of native breeds and their relationship with the land. Sadhguru said that to bring this to people's consciousness that these breeds are fast dying, Isha had brought them out on the occasion of Mattu Pongal as an awareness building initiative. Sadhguru said that while our tractors may plough the land, it is the dung and the urine of these country cows that enrich the top soil which is critical for agricultural land.

Sadhguru said that India has been an agricultural country for the past 12,000 years. However, in the next 30 years, it is estimated that approximately 25% of agriculture land will lose its quality rendering it useless for cultivation. Sadhguru said in order to promote soil enrichment, native breeds must be protected and preserved and we must definitely stop the export of the beef.

Sadhguru later offered jaggery, millets and sugarcane to the animals. A spectacular cultural display by folk artists of the Dharapuram Thappatam team, Isha Home School, Isha Samskriti and Sounds of Isha brought a lively audience to its feet. A traditional Pongal folk dance by expatriate volunteers dressed in traditional attire had the crowd cheering and applauding. An offering of Prasadam was made to everyone at the venue at the close of festivities.

### **Sadhguru - Founder, Isha Foundation**

Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and a New York Times bestselling author. Sadhguru was conferred the; Padma Vibhushan; by the Government of India in 2017, the highest annual civilian award, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service.

Three decades ago, Sadhguru founded Isha Foundation, a non-profit human-service organization, with human well-being as its core commitment. Sadhguru has initiated powerful yoga programs for human transformation as well as various outreach projects to uplift under-served communities in rural India.

### **Isha Foundation**

Isha Foundation, founded by Sadhguru, is a volunteer-run, international non-profit, human service organisation dedicated to cultivating human potential. Isha Foundation is operated by over 9 million volunteers from more than 250 city-based centers spread worldwide. The Foundation is headquartered at Isha Yoga Center, set at the base of the Velliangiri Mountains in southern India, and at the Isha Institute of Inner Sciences on the spectacular Cumberland Plateau in middle Tennessee, USA.

**If you would like to know more about this, please write to [mediarelations@ishafoundation.org](mailto:mediarelations@ishafoundation.org).**