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The President of India joins lakhs of people in Mahashivaratri celebrations at Isha

The President was the Chief Guest at the 25th year of Mahashivaratri at Isha

4 March 2019, Coimbatore: The President of India, Shri. Ram Nath Kovind, joined lakhs of people in celebrating Mahashivaratri at Isha Yoga Center this year. Isha celebrated the 25th anniversary of Mahashivaratri in the presence of Adiyogi with a nightlong cultural extravaganza that began at 6 p.m. on 4th March and ended at 6 a.m. on the 5th. The President was the Chief Guest at the event.

Sadhguru, Founder, Isha Foundation, welcomed the President at the event. "It's our profound privilege and an honour to have with us, the President of India here today," said Sadhguru while also welcoming all State Governors, Ministers, dignitaries and the lakhs of visitors who were present.

The President was given a tour of the Isha Yoga Center by Sadhguru and participated in a process to cleanse the five elements, known as *Pancha Bhuta Aradhana*, at the Dhyanalinga Yogic temple. The process was conducted by Sadhguru. The President also visited the Linga Bhairavi Devi temple.

The President arrived at Adiyogi and was given a rousing reception by lakhs of people gathered at the venue and proceeded to light the Mahayoga Yagna to symbolize the spreading of yoga through a million Isha Yoga Veeras, around the world. After the national anthem was sung, the President and Sadhguru also paid homage to the slain martyrs of Pulwama by planting saplings. The Devi Aarti was performed for the Utsava Murti in the presence of Adiyogi.

The President inaugurated the Adiyogi Divya Darshanam, a sound and light laser show, with a narrative on Adiyogi who expounded the 112 ways through which human beings

can reach their ultimate nature. Divya Darshanam is set to become a regular feature for Adiyogi visitors.

In his address, the President said that Shiva's message was "a worthy life is one that is lived in the service of others," adding that he was very happy to "be with you today in the presence of this 112-foot statue of Adiyogi." The President commented that he was very happy to see so many young people taking to yoga.

The Maha Aarti was performed to pay obeisance to Adiyogi or Adi Guru, the first Guru. Mahashivaratri is said to be the night Shiva, the Adi Guru, became absolutely still after many millennia in meditation; it is spiritually the most auspicious of all Indian festivals.

An eclectic mix of artists that included drummers from Azerbaijan and *Sounds of Isha* as well as several classical dancers and folk artists performed through the night. Celebrity performers included Amit Trivedi, Hariharan and Karthik. The performances were interspersed with discourses by Sadhguru as well as meditation sessions. Lakhs of people participated in the much awaited powerful midnight meditation led by Sadhguru.

For those who could not be present at the venue, over 100 television and web channels streamed the event live enabling them to participate virtually, reaching the event to a few million people worldwide.

The Maha Annadanam, which is an offering of food to everyone who visits the center at this time, was served to lakhs of people.

Mahashivaratri is significant because of the immense spiritual benefits it offers due to natural planetary positions. On this night, the northern hemisphere of the planet is positioned such that there is a natural upsurge of energy in the human system, pushing one towards their spiritual peak. It is therefore considered important to stay awake with the spine erect to benefit from this natural upsurge of energy. The forces of the night are agnostic to faith or religion making Mahashivaratri a universally significant night for all human beings, especially those on the spiritual path.

Visitors received a rudraksh bead and the *Sarpa Sutra* as prasadam. The one lakh and eight rudraksh beads that adorned Adiyogi over the last year were distributed as rudraksh prasadam. The *Sarpa Sutra* is a consecrated copper snake ring worn on the left ring finger to promote stability and well-being.

“May this Great Night of Shiva become a night of awakening for you,” said Sadhguru in His Mahashivaratri message.

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.

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