

Vat Amavasya Meets Harit Yoga: A Celebration of Tradition and Nature

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A special event organised by the National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN), Pune on 26th May 2025 blending the traditional Vat Amavasya festival with the Harit Yoga initiative of the Ministry of Ayush, has caught the imagination of both yoga enthusiasts and nature-lovers alike. This event, part of the 11th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2025, emphasized the deep-rooted cultural and ecological significance of the Banyan tree, or Vat Vriksh (*Ficus benghalensis*)

Celebrating the Banyan Tree

The Banyan tree holds a revered place in Indian culture, symbolizing longevity, wisdom, and spiritual growth. Its ecological benefits are profound, offering shade, habitat for wildlife, and contributing to air purification. Yet, its role extends beyond the environment to touch upon the spiritual and cultural tapestries of life in India.

The Event

Pune was pleasantly surprised on 26th May, with the early arrival of the South-West monsoons. And the continuous rains did in no way dampen the enthusiasm at the NIN campus at Nisarg Gram, Pune. The event saw participation and involvement from staff, faculty, students and various invited stake-holders. Dr. Satyalakshmi, the Director of NIN, in the welcome address, underscored the importance of continuing the tradition of revering trees, linking it to the broader context of Harit Yoga and the International Day of Yoga (IDY). This initiative aims to intertwine yoga practices with environmental consciousness, fostering a holistic approach to wellness. Touching upon the theme of IDY-2025 which is "Yoga for One Earth, One Health", she explained that the event is an attempt to give a practical demonstration of the theme.

Participants engaged in a symbolic ceremony, encircling the Banyan tree with hand-woven threads, pledging to protect and nurture it.

Shri Anant Biradar, the President of International Naturopathy Organisation and a guest at the event, addressed the gathering, praising the Ministry of Ayush for its innovative programs for spreading the message of IDY-2025. He emphasized how such events motivate people to connect Yoga with environmental protection, creating a synergy between personal well-being and ecological stewardship.

A Thought-Provoking Reflection

The celebration of Vat Amavasya, enriched by the Harit Yoga initiative, serves as a reminder of the profound connection between nature-conservation and yoga. It invites us to reflect on how ancient traditions can inspire modern ecological practices. As the participants enjoyed mango juice under the expansive canopy of the Banyan, the event concluded with a renewed commitment to nurturing both the self and the environment.

By embracing such integrative celebrations, the Ministry of Ayush honours India's cultural heritage while promoting ecological responsibility, inspiring one and all to harmonise Yoga and environmental consciousness for a sustainable future.

MV/AKS/PM

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