

MUSEUM OF INDIA

India, with its rich tapestry of civilizations, cultures, and traditions, is home to a diverse array of museums that reflect the depth and diversity of its heritage. From ancient art and archaeology to science, war history, and tribal life, the "Museum Map of India" offers an enriching guide to the cultural treasures spread across the subcontinent.

The journey begins in Delhi, the capital, where the National Museum holds thousands of artifacts spanning over 5,000 years, including Harappan relics, Mughal miniatures, and Buddhist art. Nearby, the Indian Air Force Museum and Rail Museum add layers of military and industrial history. In Amritsar, the Partition Museum gives a heart-wrenching account of the 1947 division of India.

Rajasthan, known for its royal legacy, features the City Palace Museum in Udaipur and the Albert Hall Museum in Jaipur, showcasing Rajputana grandeur; weaponry, and traditional arts. In Uttar Pradesh, the State Museum in Lucknow and Samath Museum near Varanasi are prominent, holding sculptures and ancient Buddhist heritage.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Bhimbetka rock shelters also provide natural museum-like experiences with prehistoric cave paintings.

Mumbai, the financial capital, houses the famous Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum), known for its art, archaeology, and cultural exhibits. The Gandhi Museum in Ahmedabad and the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery in Vadodara represent Gujarat's intellectual and nationalist legacy.

In Kolkata, the Indian Museum, established in 1814, is the oldest and largest in India, featuring six sections: Art, Archaeology, Anthropology, Geology, Zoology, and Botany. The Victoria Memorial is another iconic museum that combines art, history, and colonial architecture.

The Government Museum in Chennai is the second oldest in India and houses ancient bronze statues, Amaravati sculptures, and numismatics. Kerala's Hill Palace Museum and Napier Museum in Thiruvananthapuram preserve the royal legacy of the Travancore kings.

Hyderabad in Telangana features the Salar Jung Museum, one of the three National Museums of India, housing rare artifacts, collected by Nawab Salar Jung III.

The State Museum in Kohima, Nagaland, and the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh, display indigenous lifestyles, tribal costumes, and traditional weapons.

Empowering Women, Nurturing Children: Yoga for One Earth, One Health

■ ANNPURNA DEVI



India, the birthplace of the ancient practice of Yoga, continues to uphold this ancient wisdom, not just as physical exercises but as a holistic philosophy for the nurturing of the human mind, body, and spirit. The Sanskrit phrase from the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Verse 50), means "Yoga is skill in action." This is a powerful teaching by Lord Krishna, which reminds us that true yoga is not limited to physical postures or meditation but is reflected in how skilfully and mindfully we perform our daily duties.

As Union Minister of Women and Child Development, I firmly believe in Yoga's transformative potential, particularly in empowering women and nurturing children- the very foundations of our society.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Yoga has gained global recognition as a channel for wellness and social transformation. The United Nations' decision to declare June 21 as International Day of Yoga in 2014 was the world's recognition of India's great spiritual and civilizational heritage.

This year, the theme of International Day of Yoga, "Yoga for One Earth, One Health",

highlights Yoga's inclusive and universal appeal. Prime Minister also emphasised "Yoga is free from copyright, patent, royalty. It is flexible - you can practice alone, in a group, learn from a teacher, or be self-taught". As the nation steps towards a Viksit Bharat, it is necessary to integrate Yoga into the lives of women and children across the nation.

Women and children constitute about two-thirds of India's population, and they are more vulnerable and exposed to health issues. So, looking after their physical and mental health becomes imperative, and Yoga can play a pivotal role in it. Yoga offers numerous physical and mental benefits for women. From improving mental health and hormonal balance to strengthening the muscular and skeletal system, Yoga is uniquely suited to meet the physiological needs of women across age groups.

Adopting yoga before and after pregnancy empowers women to effectively manage the health challenges they encounter during this transformative period. Prenatal Yoga, with its targeted postures and meditative techniques, alleviates pregnancy discomforts, supports pain management, and boosts energy. It prepares expectant mothers for childbirth physically and emotionally. Postnatal Yoga helps lactating mothers in their recovery, emotional well-being, enhancing breastfeeding, and strengthening the mother-child bond.

To accentuate the practice of Yoga in women, we have a network of over 25 lakh Anganwadi workers across India who inform, educate, and assist women and children in adopting Yoga as a necessary habit

in their daily lives.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has constantly advocated for women-led development. He actively supports the increased participation of women in the workforce, which is instrumental to the growth of any economy. The World Bank also argued that increased female labour force participation can boost the manufacturing output by 9% and help us achieve a high-income developed nation status by 2047. All this can only be achieved when we have a physically and emotionally healthy women workforce.

In today's rapidly changing world, children too are increasingly impacted by lifestyle disorders, screen dependence, and academic pressures. Yoga offers an evidence-based, timely, and culturally rooted response to these challenges. It enhances concentration, memory, emotional regulation, sleep quality, and stress management - key components of holistic childhood development. Through Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0, the Ministry is embedding Yoga into early childhood care and development, laying the foundation for lifelong wellness habits.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development under the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister is working towards a multi-pronged strategy to enhance yoga practices into the lives of women and children. The Ministry houses various flagship programmes and schemes for women and children aimed towards their well-being, health, and nutrient intake, and while delivering these benefits, our institutions such as Anganwadi Centres, One Stop Centres, Child Care Institutions etc. educate, influ-

ence, and facilitate the beneficiaries to complement their lifestyle with yoga for better health results. Special yoga modules, designed in convergence with the Ministry of AYUSH, are being introduced through these Centres, focusing on women and children.

In the changing discourse of the global order, women are now taking on new roles and responsibilities. From IT to space and from policymaking to strategic defence, women are the new frontline warriors. We recently witnessed how two brave women officers, Col. Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, became the face of Operation Sindoor. This is a great example of the difference women are making in today's world. Hence, women must keep working towards unlocking their potential with yoga playing a key role.

Our government's commitment to yoga is about fostering inclusive development. By actively incorporating yoga into our women and child welfare policies, we are asserting our cultural sovereignty while simultaneously enhancing grassroots health and well-being. Yoga must be seen not just as a practice, but as a participatory movement- a Jan Andolan, for health and wellness, and our government is committed to take this movement to every part of the nation.

In our journey towards Viksit Bharat@2047, Yoga offers a vision for a more compassionate, resilient, and empowered society. Let us unite in embracing Yoga as a social and personal commitment to build a healthier India and reach new heights.

(The author is Union Minister of Women and Child Development)

Chichi Mata Temple: The Divine Sentinel of Samba

■ VIVEK KOUL

Chichi Mata Temple, nestled in the Samba district of Jammu division, is one of the most revered spiritual destinations in the region, drawing thousands of devotees each year. Considered a significant Shakti Peeth, this temple holds immense religious, historical, and cultural importance for devotees not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also across North India. The temple is dedicated to Goddess Chichi Mata, believed to be an incarnation of Goddess Durga, symbolizing strength, motherhood, and divine protection. According to local legends and scriptures, the temple is associated with the mythological tale of the dismemberment of Goddess Sati's body. When Lord Shiva carried her charred body across the universe in grief, Lord Vishnu, in order to relieve him from sorrow, used his Sudarshan Chakra to cut Sati's body into pieces. These parts fell at various locations across the Indian subcontinent and are now worshipped as Shakti Peeths. It is believed that the little finger of Goddess Sati fell at this site in Samba, which came to be known as Chichi Mata. The name "Chichi" is derived from the Dogri word for "little finger," reinforcing the spiritual significance of the place among devotees.

The temple complex is located on the National Highway 44, making it easily accessible to pilgrims traveling between Jammu and Kathua. The setting is serene, surrounded by low hills



and dotted with lush greenery, offering a peaceful retreat for spiritual seekers. The temple structure itself is a blend of traditional and modern architecture. The sanctum sanctorum houses the idol of Goddess Chichi Mata, adorned with vibrant clothes, flowers, and jewelry. A continuous flame, or "Akhand Jyoti," burns in her honor,

symbolizing the eternal presence of the divine mother. What sets Chichi Mata Temple apart is not only its religious sanctity but also the strong emotional bond devotees share with it. Many locals regard the deity as their family guardian or "kul devi," and it is customary for families to visit the temple to seek blessings before any auspicious

event - be it a wedding, childbirth, or housewarming ceremony. During Navratras, the temple sees a surge in footfall as devotees throng the site to offer prayers, fast, and perform rituals in honor of the goddess. Special havans, bhajans, and langars (community meals) are organized during this period, turning the temple premises into a hub of devotion and communal harmony.

Another key aspect of the Chichi Mata Temple is its role in the holy pilgrimage circuit of Jammu. It is often referred to as the "Gateway to Vaishno Devi," as many pilgrims en route to the famous shrine in Katra make it a point to stop at Chichi Mata to seek the goddess's blessings for a safe and fulfilling yatra. This has increased the temple's visibility and importance over the years. For many pilgrims, a visit to Chichi Mata marks the spiritual beginning of their journey. Local folklore and oral traditions further enrich the legacy of the temple. Elders in the region speak of numerous miracles attributed to the goddess. Tales of the sick being healed, lost items being recovered, or seemingly impossible wishes being fulfilled are commonly heard in the temple corridors. These stories, passed down through generations, reinforce the faith and devotion of the community. For many, it is not just a temple but a divine shelter in times of need. The administration and upkeep of the temple are managed by a trust comprising local volunteers, priests, and government support. Over

the years, efforts have been made to improve the infrastructure around the temple to cater to the growing number of visitors. Amenities such as a community hall, parking facilities, and clean drinking water have been introduced. The temple trust also engages in social welfare activities such as organizing health camps, educational workshops, and food distribution for the needy, thereby extending the temple's role beyond spiritual services to community welfare.

The temple also plays a crucial cultural role in the region. It serves as a venue for various religious and cultural festivals, including Ram Navami, Janmashtami, and Diwali. During these occasions, the temple comes alive with colorful decorations, devotional music, and cultural performances by local artists. Such events not only celebrate religious traditions but also preserve the rich Dogra culture of Jammu. Visitors to the temple often express awe at the spiritual energy of the place. Many speak of a calming presence and an inexplicable sense of peace upon entering the temple premises. It is this intangible spiritual experience that makes devotees return year after year, regardless of age or background. The temple welcomes people of all castes, creeds, and walks of life, embodying the inclusive spirit of Indian spirituality. Despite its popularity, Chichi Mata Temple has managed to retain its simplicity and sanctity. Unlike some heavily commercialized pilgrimage centers, this temple

remains deeply rooted in its spiritual essence. The priests, dressed in traditional attire, perform rituals with deep reverence and guide devotees in understanding the significance of each offering and prayer. The temple bells, the chanting of mantras, and the fragrance of incense create an atmosphere that transports visitors to a higher realm of consciousness.

In recent years, the Jammu tourism department has recognized the temple's potential and included it in its religious tourism circuits. Efforts are ongoing to promote the temple while preserving its sanctity and environment. Signboards, brochures, and guided tours are being introduced to educate visitors about the temple's history and spiritual value. Plans are also being discussed to improve connectivity and accommodation for pilgrims, especially during the festive seasons. The Chichi Mata Temple stands today not just as a monument of faith, but as a symbol of the region's spiritual resilience and cultural richness. In a world increasingly marked by stress and uncertainty, places like Chichi Mata offer a refuge for the soul, reminding people of the enduring power of faith and divine grace. Whether one visits the temple for religious reasons, cultural curiosity, or personal peace, the experience leaves a lasting impression. It is this universal appeal-rooted in tradition yet welcoming to all that makes Chichi Mata Temple a timeless spiritual beacon in the heart of Jammu.

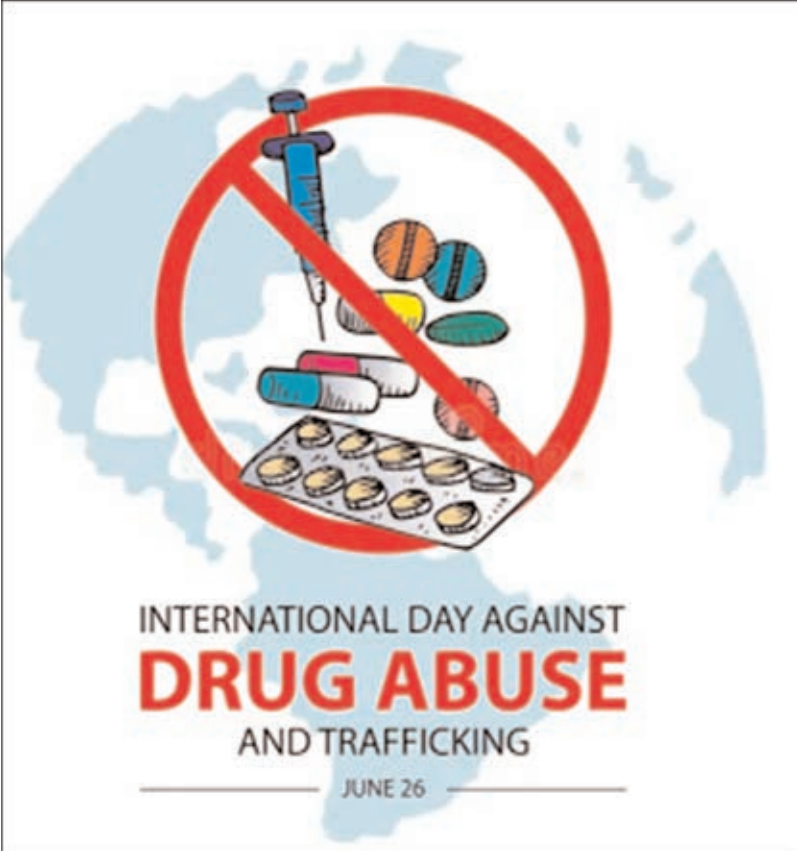
COMPASSION, COOPERATION AND COMMITMENT: BREAK THE CYCLE OF ORGANIZED CRIME

■ PROF. (DR.) VIKAS SHARMA, KOMAL SUDAN

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as World Drug Day is marked on 26 June every year to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving a world free of drug abuse. Established in December 1987 by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 42/112, this day serves as a call for individuals, communities and governments across the world to strengthen action to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse. The observance not only highlights the health and social consequences of drug addiction, but also underscores the interconnected issues of crime, violence, human trafficking and economic instability that often accompany illicit drug trade. The global drug problem presents a multifaceted challenge that touches the lives of millions and with the consequences of drug trafficking and organized crime, the impact of drugs is far-reaching and complex. The day acts as a platform to promote awareness about the dangers of drug use, to encourage preventive measures and to support those battling addiction. Governments and organizations around the world host awareness campaigns, educational programs, public discussions and outreach initiatives to address the issue from both preventive and rehabilitative perspectives. Over the years, drug abuse has evolved into a global crisis that transcends borders. From synthetic opioids like fentanyl to traditional substances such as cannabis, heroin and cocaine, the variety of drugs being misused is vast and growing. The rise in prescription drug misuse and the increasing presence of synthetic drugs have added new layers of complexity to the already critical challenge. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation, disrupting drug supply chains and treatment services, while increasing mental health issues and economic stress, which in turn pushed more people into substance use or relapse.

Youth and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the dangers of drug abuse. Peer pressure, curiosity, a desire to escape from reality or a lack of awareness can lead young people down a path that becomes difficult to reverse. The consequences are far-reaching impacting not only the individual's health, but also their education, family life and social integration. Drug addiction among youth is a pressing issue that requires a multi-pronged strategy. On the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, special attention is given to youth education programs that inform children and teenagers about the risks of drugs and equip them with the life skills to resist temptation. This year's campaign "Break the cycle. #StopOrganizedCrime" highlights the need for coordinated long-term action to break the cycle of organized crime and drug trafficking by addressing root causes, investing in prevention and building stronger health, education and social systems.

One of the central aims of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is to promote a drug-free society through increased awareness, prevention strategies and coordinated global efforts. There is growing recognition that



effective drug prevention and treatment programs must go beyond enforcement and focus on comprehensive public health approaches. This includes tackling the root causes that push individuals toward drug use such as poverty, trauma, mental health issues, unemployment and lack of education or opportunity. Another significant aspect of the day is the fight against drug trafficking. Illicit drug trade is one of the largest global criminal enterprises, generating billions of dollars annually and fuelling organized crime, violence and corruption. Drug trafficking

not only endangers the lives of users, but also destabilizes communities and economies. Drug abuse is not just a criminal or moral issue, it is a public health crisis that requires compassion, understanding and comprehensive treatment. Unfortunately, drug users are often stigmatized and marginalized, which discourages them from seeking help and reinforces the cycle of addiction. The UNODC and other stakeholders advocate for policies that uphold human rights, promote social inclusion and ensure access to affordable and quality treatment services. Rehabilitation and reintegration are key pillars of any effective drug control strategy. Providing individuals with the tools to recover and lead productive lives is essential not only for their well-being, but also for society as a whole. Vocational training, psychological support, community engagement and ongoing monitoring can help former addicts reintegrate successfully.

The World Drug Day serves as a reminder that every person struggling with addiction deserves a second chance and that recovery is not only possible, but should be supported at every level. This day also reminds the international community of its shared responsibility. While efforts at the national level are vital, cross-border cooperation, coordinated policy-making and joint efforts in research and capacity-building are equally important. The global drug problem requires a united response, rooted in mutual understanding and a commitment to reducing both supply and demand. Civic engagement and public participation are also encouraged on this day. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), educational institutions, health agencies and community groups often host events such as seminars, marches, art exhibitions and storytelling sessions to spread awareness. Social media campaigns also play a crucial role in reaching younger audiences and breaking the silence surrounding addiction. In recent years, the United Nations has also focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in relation to drug abuse and trafficking. A comprehensive drug strategy is thus not only an act of public health and security, but also a step toward sustainable global development.

To conclude, the World Drug Day is much more than an annual observance, it is a global movement that seeks to create a safer and healthier world. It calls for collective action against one of the most serious social and health challenges. From raising awareness and educating the public to implementing strong policies and providing care to those in need, every action counts. Whether you are a healthcare worker, educator, student or concerned citizen, this day is a powerful opportunity to reflect, advocate and contribute to the global effort to eliminate the harm caused by drugs. Only through compassion, cooperation and commitment, we can truly overcome the challenges posed by drug abuse and trafficking.

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