

DIASPORA BI-WEEKLY

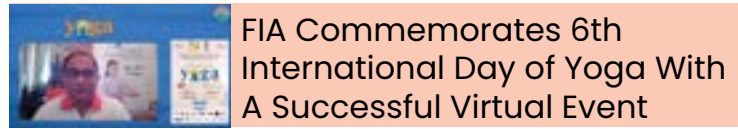
Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT. 501(C)3
The Largest Non-Profit Umbrella Organization in the Tri-state of NY-NJ-CT

Sunday / June 28, 2020

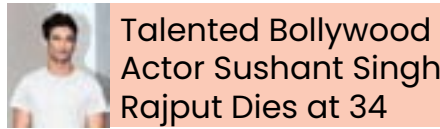
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An initiative by FIA

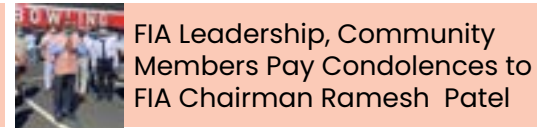
100% VOLUNTEER RUN ORGANIZATION EST. 1970



FIA Commemorates 6th International Day of Yoga With A Successful Virtual Event

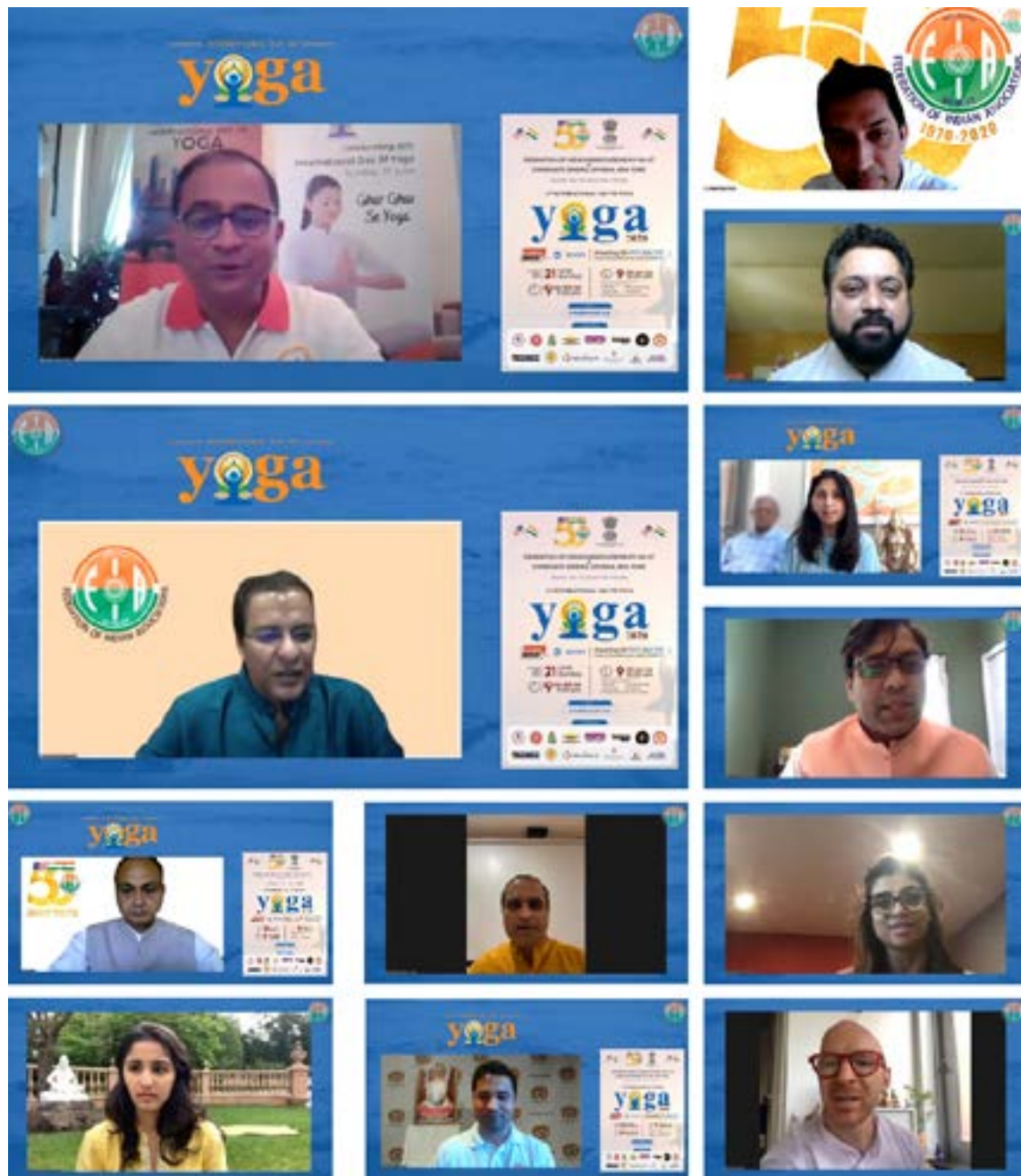


Talented Bollywood Actor Sushant Singh Rajput Dies at 34



FIA Leadership, Community Members Pay Condolences to FIA Chairman Ramesh Patel

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Yoga enthusiasts of all age groups attend 5 different sessions offered on Zoom, maxing out the capacity of the streaming platform.

The Federation of Indian Associations of NY-NJ-CT (FIA-Tri-state) successfully commemorated the 6th annual International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2020. Since the inception of the International Day of Yoga, the FIA, in partnership with the Consulate General of India in New York, has celebrated the day which highlights the importance of yoga.

Over 500 yoga enthusiasts of all age groups logged on to the virtual celebration on Zoom, which included five simultaneous yoga segments, taught by renowned yoga teachers. The event was very well received by the Indian diaspora, maxing out the capacity of the streaming platform.

Highlighting the importance of yoga, FIA President Anil Bansal said it is the "greatest gift" from Bharat to the world. "Besides so many benefits of yoga, it improves our lung resiliency, and has become more pronounced during this Covid-19 pandemic," he said.

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derived from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the

The Federation of Indian Associations of NY-NJ-CT (FIA-Tri-state), in collaboration with the Consulate General of India in New York, celebrated the 6th International Day of Yoga on June 21, 2020. More than 500 yoga enthusiasts of all age groups attended the virtual event. Seen from top left are, Consul General of India in New York, Sandeep Chakravorty; FIA Executive Vice President, Himanshu Bhatia; FIA Vice President Saurin Parikh; FIA President Anil Bansal; Falguni Pandya of FIA yoga committee; FIA Immediate Past President, Alok Kumar, FIA Secretary, Parveen Bansal; Rahul Bhalerao of Subodh Yoga; pilates instructor Mitali Das; yoga teacher Aaksha Amin; Vijay Kumar of Vihangam Yoga, and Ashtanga Yoga teacher Eddie Stern.

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union of body and consciousness. The word yoga, from the Sanskrit word yuj, means to yoke or bind, and is often interpreted as “union” or a method of discipline. A male who practices yoga is called a yogi, a female practitioner, a yogini.

Patanjali is believed to have collated the practice of yoga into the Yoga Sutra an estimated 2,000 years ago. The Sutra is a collection of 195 statements that serves as a philosophical guidebook for most of the yoga that is practiced today. It also outlines eight limbs of yoga: the yamas (restraints), niyamas (observances), asana (postures), pranayama (breathing), pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), dharana (concentration), dhyani (meditation), and samadhi (absorption). As we explore these eight limbs, we begin by refining our behavior in the outer world, and then we focus inwardly until we reach samadhi (liberation, enlightenment).

Today, yoga is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity.

The International Day of Yoga has been celebrated annually on June 21, 2015, following its inception in the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

The draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a record 175 member states. The proposal was first introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly, in which he said: “Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action ... a holistic approach [that] is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature.”

The resolution notes “the importance of individuals and populations making healthier choices and following lifestyle patterns that foster good health.” In this regard, the World Health Organization has also urged its member states to help their citizens reduce physical inactivity, which is among the top ten leading causes of death worldwide, and a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes.

Alok Kumar, FIA Immediate Past President and one of the organizers of the Yoga Day 2020 celebration, said the International Day of Yoga initiative from the Government of India “has added a positive vibe” to millions across the world. He conveyed his gratitude to Consul General of India in New York, Sandeep Chakravorty, as well as the Yoga 2020 team, including Himanshu Bhatia, Saurin Parikh, Falguni Pandya and Andy Bhatia, for successfully implementing all the

logistics and coordination needed to make the event a grand success.

Consul General Chakravorty, in his address to the participants noted that June 21, 2020, had a special significance, because, along with the International Day of Yoga, it was also the summer solstice, Father’s Day, and a day when parts of the world witnessed a solar eclipse. “Today is the coming together of celestial as well as man made phenomena,” he said. He highlighted the importance of yoga in helping create a physical and mental balance, “particularly in these times when we cannot indulge in outdoor activities.” The Consul General also took this opportunity to bid farewell to the attendees and members of the community as his New York term comes to an end.

“Ghar Ghar Se yoga karen, Khush rahen, swasthya rahen” (Do yoga from home, stay happy, stay healthy) Chakravorty concluded.

Speakers gave an overview of the importance of yoga and talked about how yoga has integrated in our daily life.

Vijay Kumar of the North American Institute of Vihangam Yoga talked about the different forms of yoga and their significance and stressed on the importance of asana and pranayama. “Asana is irreplaceable,” Vijay Kumar said, as it not only stabilizes the outside body, but also works on the organs inside the body. He conducted a session on ancient meditation techniques.

Eddie Stern, a New York-based Ashtanga Yoga teacher, author, and lecturer, conducted a session on beginner yoga where he taught attendees some breathing techniques, basic asanas and modified Surya Namaskar or sun salutations.

Aashka Amin, a certified yoga teacher, conducted the kids yoga session. She has been trained to work with kids, especially with disability and trauma. She believes that yoga can provide much-needed relief to troubled kids and those with special needs.

Rahul Bhalerao of Subodh Yoga, focused on Raj Yoga meditation, a simple form of meditation without rituals or mantras and can be practiced anywhere at any time.

Mitali Das focused on pilates, a physical fitness system developed in the early 20th century by Joseph Pilates, after whom it was named. Pilates primarily focuses on trying to relax muscles which are tense and provide strengthening of the numerous muscles of the body.

The virtual event was deemed very successful. The FIA team, once again, maintained its commitment to bringing authenticity and spirit community in each of their events.

FIA Leadership, Community Members Pay Condolences to FIA Chairman Ramesh Patel



FIA President Anil Bansal speaks at a driveby event hosted for Ramesh Patel.



FIA leadership, including executive committee members and trustees, and their family members, pay condolences to Chairman Ramesh Patel's family. Patel, 78, passed away peacefully, surrounded by his family on June 6 due to complications from Covid-19. He is survived by his wife Sucheta, son Suhas, a cardiologist, and two daughters Manisha and Kunjal, along with his extended family and his very large FIA family and friends circle.

Talented Bollywood Actor Sushant Singh Rajput Dies at 34



By a Staff Writer

Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead in his Mumbai home on June 14. Police reports confirmed that he committed suicide. He was 34. He is survived by his father, Krishna Kumar Singh, and four older sisters: Shweta Singh Kirti, Ritu Singh, Mitu Singh and Nitu Singh.

A postmortem report from Mumbai's Cooper Hospital has revealed there was no foul play involved in Rajput's death, and has ruled it a suicide. The actor died of asphyxia due to hanging. Rajput was found hanging in his Mumbai residence on June 14.

While the Mumbai Police investigate Sushant's death, Bollywood actor Shekhar Suman has created a forum called #justiceforSushantforum demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the death. On Twitter, the hashtag #CBIEnquiryForSushant has been viral for over a week now.

According to a New York Times obituary, Rajput often gave credit for his success to his mother, Usha Singh, who died in 2002, when he was 16. "There was a vacuum in my life after her, as she was the only one with whom I would discuss everything," the report quoted him as saying in an earlier interview.

Since his death, news reports have revealed that the actor was "banned" and sidelined from big Bollywood production houses. There's also rumors of possible drug abuse, and rehab. Rajput was supposed to star in both "Half Girlfriend" and "Fitoor," but was forced to drop out. He was also roped in for "Befikre," opposite Vani Kapoor, but the film eventually went to Ranveer Singh. Rajput's suicide has also bought the issue of mental health to the forefront.

Ironically, Rajput's last release, "Chhichhore," with Shraddha Kapoor, saw him play the role of a father who makes his son understand that committing suicide is not a solution to any problem.

Deepika Padukone, who has been open about her experiences with mental health, took to Twitter to express her shock. "I cannot stress enough about the importance of reaching out," she wrote. Similarly, Anushka Sharma, who co-starred with Singh in "PK," wrote, "I'm so sad and upset knowing that we lived in an environment that could not help you through any troubles you may have had."

Rajput was born on Jan. 21, 1986, in Purnia, Bihar, the youngest of five children and the only boy.

He completed his schooling from Patna and New Delhi. In 2003, he secured the seventh rank in the Delhi

College of Engineering Entrance Exam and got admitted in B.E. Mechanical Engineering.

Rajput reportedly refused a scholarship at Stanford University, to pursue his dream of becoming an actor in Bollywood. He is said to have sought inspiration from Shah Rukh Khan in "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge." Prior to his television career, he was dancer with choreographer Shiamak Davar's troupe.

A Bollywood outsider, Rajput was an unconventional actor. He often spoke about not having a godfather in the industry.

A former National Olympiad winner in physics, and he was said to be a voracious reader and an astronomy buff.

As part of his research for the film "Chanda Mama Door Ke," he also visited the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 2017. The film was eventually shelved.

The International Space University (ISU) in France paid condolences to Rajput's family and friends, saying the actor's memory will "remain among his thousands of followers across India and all over the world." Rajput was supposed to visit the campus last year but was unable to due to scheduling conflict.

Actress Priyanka Chopra also recalled Rajput's fascination with space. "I'll never forget our conversations about astrophysics at sunrise," she wrote on Instagram.

Rajput ran a social media book club for bibliophiles where he shared books for avid readers and "encouraged dialogue" on different topics.

His friend, Dr. Karan Jani, a black hole astrophysicist and LIGO scientist told Times Now that Rajput took his "highly-advanced" telescope at Chambal during the shooting of "Sonchiriya" so that he could observe the nebulae.

Another friend, Rohini Iyer wrote on Instagram that the film industry was "a small part" of his life. Rajput, she said, "had many worlds beyond that."

Filmmaker Dibakar Banerjee told Indian media that Rajput was "a dance loving chhokra from an engineering college" who, having made it in Bollywood, was "enthused, sincere and totally focused" on his craft. He said the actor always had "a book or two" with him and took pride in the fact that he had an "inner intellectual life away from the shallower aspects of showbiz."

Rajput made his television debut with Kis Desh Mein Hai Mera Dil." But "Pavitra Rishta" was his big break. Based on the popular Tamil show "Thirumathi Selvam," it premiered on June 1, 2009, on Zee TV. Rajput was seen as Manav Deshmukh, a garage owner, and within no time, he became a household name.

In a June 2, 2020 tweet to commemorate 11 years since Pavitra Rishta" premiered, Ekta Kapoor disclosed that

Zee TV was not convinced about casting Sushant as the lead but she was sure that he would win millions of hearts. Kapoor is the director and creative head of 'Balaji Telefilms Limited', which produced the show. True to her words, Rajput did that and then some.

He left the show in 2011, and ventured into Bollywood. In 2013 he made his Hindi film debut with Abhishek Kapoor's "Kai Po Che," based on Chetan Bhagat's novel, "The Three Mistakes of My Life." Rajput plays Ishant, a former district level cricketer, who is a victim of politics in the cricketing selection fraternity. He received rave reviews for the film and a nomination for a Filmfare Award for Best Male Debut and he won a Star Guild and Screen Award in the same category. He turned to cricket again, a few years later. This time as Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the former captain of the Indian cricket team.

Directed by Neeraj Pandey in 2016, "M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story" became one of the highest-grossing films of Bollywood that year. The film chronicles the life of Dhoni from a young age through a series of life events.

In 2013, Rajput was also seen in "Shuddh Desi Romance," alongside Parineeti Chopra and Vaani Kapoor. In 2014, he played a minor role in "PK" starring Aamir Khan and Anushka Sharma. In 2015, he starred in a lead role in a mystery thriller "Detective Byomkesh Bakshy!"

In 2017, he co-starred with Kriti Sanon in "Raabta," and the following year he was seen in Kedarnath," with Sara Ali Khan's debut.

His next film, Nitesh Tiwary's "Chhichhore," was a big hit and entered the coveted 100 crore club. Despite the film's success, Rajput's colleagues fans say his stellar performance in the film was ignored and he didn't receive any award nominations either.

In 2019, his film "Drive," was released directly on Netflix last year. Directed by Tarun Mansukhani and co-starring Jacqueline Fernandez, the film was produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions.

Rajput's latest film is the yet-to-be-released "Dil Bechara," based on "The Fault in Our Stars," the 2012 novel by John Green. The film marks the directorial debut of Mukesh Chhabra and stars Saif Ali Khan and debutante Sanjana Sanghi. The film's release has been postponed multiple times, due to post-production delays and then again due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He was also to star in RSandip Singh's first directorial venture titled "Vande Bharatam." However, with Rajput's untimely death, Singh's film never took off. But he said that he will make the film as a tribute to his friend. "I promise you this... I will make this film! And it will be a tribute to the loving memory of SSR who inspired millions and gave them hope that anything is possible! Just dream it and believe it!" he said.