

11-year-old Indian-origin Yoga prodigy wins UK PM award

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By Aditi Khanna

London, Jun 1 (PTI) An 11-year-old Indian-origin boy from south-east England, who has led daily Yoga classes for 40 children across 14 countries during the coronavirus lockdown, on Tuesday received UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's daily Points of Light award.

Ishwar Sharma, from Sevenoaks in Kent, started taking up Yoga when he was three years old after seeing his father practise daily and is a three-time World Yoga Champion.

His autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has propelled him to help children through Yoga, particularly those with special needs like himself.

"You have brought the joy of Yoga to hundreds of children globally during lockdown. I was particularly inspired to hear how you have helped children with special needs enjoy the activity you enjoy and excel at," Johnson said in a personal letter to Sharma.

The schoolboy's free online classes were already proving a success

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before the start of the coronavirus pandemic but expanded even further in recent months. His virtual sessions were seen as even more vital as he is passionate about promoting both the mental and physical health benefits of practising Yoga.

"I am honoured and humbled by this recognition. There have been unprecedented mental health issues amongst children due to the pandemic. I feel it is a recognition for Yoga as a discipline, which helps in balancing mental and physical health," said Sharma.

"This award has motivated me to continue my endeavour to spread the message of Yoga all over the world. I do hope that Yoga and meditation will be included in the national school curriculum in the future," he said.

Ishwar Sharma is the 1,646th person to receive the UK Prime Minister's daily Points of Light award, which was first launched in April 2014 to recognise outstanding individuals making a difference where they live.

Each day, an inspiring person is selected to receive the award to celebrate their remarkable achievements, including hundreds of volunteers who have been recognised for how they have served their communities through the pandemic.

The UK Prime Minister makes daily announcements of the winners to celebrate, encourage and promote volunteering and the value that it brings to the country.

The public are encouraged to write to 10 Downing Street with their suggestions for deserving candidates. PTI AK RUP
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