NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER & FACEBOOK. APP AVAILABLE ON APP STORE & PLAYSTORE WWW.FINANCIALEXPRESS.COM

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

READ TO LEAD

VOL LII NO. 93, 28 PAGES, ₹12 (PATNA & RAIPUR ₹12, SRINAGAR ₹15) PUBLISHED FROM: AHMEDABAD, BENGALURU, CHANDIGARH, CHENNAI, HYDERABAD, KOCHI, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, PUNE

SENSEX: 76,808.48 ▲ 544.15 NIFTY: 23,989.15 ▲ 135.25 NIKKEI 225: 69,404.50 ▲ 87 HANG SENG: 24,493.95 ▼ 348.72 ₹/$: 94.57 ▲ 0.15 ₹/€: 109.70 ▲ 0.23 BRENT: $80.57 ▲ $2.60 GOLD: ₹150,192 ▲ ₹59

Let's make the most of the yoga dividend

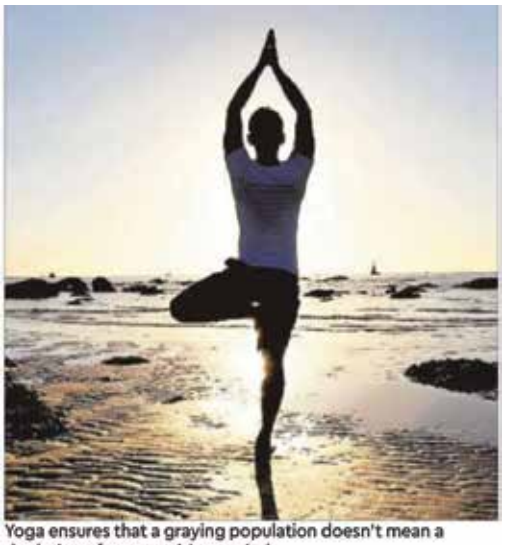
ATUL SOBTI

INDIA IS NAVIGATING a critical demographic crossroads. For decades, our economy has ridden a massive wave: a swelling, youthful workforce outnumbering dependents, supercharging growth and savings. But that historic window is closing. As global fertility rates plummet and population pyramids flatten, India is right behind. We have a narrow, 29-year generational window available to capitalise on this youth advantage before a chilly fiscal winter sets in.

Hence, it is important to not just be more productive but for a longer period. It is important to not just extend lifespan but maximise health span. This can only be done if we optimise the senior population who are out of the workforce due to their age. The need is to explore and empower the Silver Dividend by ensuring that the senior population remains active, self-reliant, and vital to our knowledge economies. For this, it's essential to find a low-cost budget that is scalable.

This is what India's solution is, not a trillion-dollar healthcare budget but an economical and highly scalable public health intervention that we've owned for millennia: Yoga.

Why is yoga the ultimate economic shield? Because it is a 5,000-year-old science of human engineering. While it physically stabilises the body, its real magic happens in the brain, preserving India's rising knowledge economy.



Yoga ensures that a graying population doesn't mean a depletion of our cognitive capital

The modern workforce runs on cognitive endurance. By combining physical posturing with breath regulation (pranayama) and meditation, yoga acts as a multi-modal workout for the brain. When an aging professional retains their executive function, their lifetime of institutional knowledge, mentorship, and emotional intelligence remains a massive national asset. Yoga ensures that a graying population doesn't mean a depletion of our cognitive capital.

By elevating yoga from a spiritual tradition into an institutionalised fiscal shield, the Ministry of Ayush is engineering a national transformation. If our youth imbibe yoga today, they peak their current productivity while securing their future health. The scale is already unprecedented.

The latest Union Budget announced a massive drive to train 150,000 certified caregivers in yoga competencies for geriatric care. Meanwhile, initiatives like "Yoga 365" and the digital "Ayush Grid", complete with AI-driven posture correction, are making safe practice universally accessible.

All this because where weight training builds raw muscle and cardio protects the heart, yoga is the ultimate all-in-one intervention. It directly targets the triad that threatens elderly independence—flexibility, balance, and postural stability, while delivering clinically proven neuroprotective outcomes.

Ultimately, Yoga is no longer just a personal wellness ritual. It is the ultimate macroeconomic vaccine for India's future. By fusing ancient human engineering with modern fiscal policy, we are building a high-yield blueprint to defy demographic decline—effectively turning a looming silver tsunami into a vibrant, self-reliant, and hyper-productive Silver Dividend.

(The author is Director General of SCOPE)

This article was published in The Financial Express newspaper dated 17th June, 2026