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Vice-President of India M Venkaiah Naidu and CMR University chancellor Sabitha Ramamurthy at an event held in Bengaluru on Sunday | PANDARINATH B

## Yoga has no religious connotations: Naidu

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PHYSICAL fitness is essential for mental alertness, said Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India, at the inauguration of a private university here on Sunday. He was talking about the country lagging in sports and one of the main factors for it being the little importance education institutions and parents give to sports classes in schools.

"When I was a student, there was a lot of enthusiasm to join the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the National Cadet Corps (NCC). But today, that is missing. In fact, Physical Training or PT classes are missing altogether. One should spend 50 per cent of their time on playgrounds and 50 per cent in classes," he said at the inauguration of CMR University campus and hostel block off Hennur-Bagalur Road, Chagalatti.

**Yoga is practised everywhere. It has no religious connotations. It is the exercise of the body and mind, not Modi**

Venkaiah Naidu,  
Vice-President

Decrying the sedentary lifestyle of students, he said PT classes in school and college curriculum were mere tokenism. "Yoga, for example, is practised in 171 countries after the United Nations adopted the International Day of Yoga. Latin America, Peru, Guatemala -- Yoga is practised everywhere. It has no religious connotations. It is the exercise of the body and mind, not Modi," he quipped, leaving students in splits.

**'India lacks centres of excellence'**

The Vice-President further said that India has 800 universities but hardly any centres of excellence. "There has been a proposal to set up seven new Indian Institutes of Technology, seven new Indian Institutes of Management, two Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research and 14 Indian Institute of Information Technology, but we need more centres of excellence," he said.