

EDUCATION

Nation's first yoga college set up

Foundation stems from cooperation memorandum signed during Modi's May visit

By CHEN LIANG and LI YINGQIN in Kunming

China's first yoga college was established at Yunnan University of Nationalities in Kunming on Saturday, following a cooperation memorandum signed between China and India in May.

At the founding ceremony, Peng Jinhui, president of the university, said: "The university has confidence to build the college into an influential brand with its own characteristics, a platform for cultural exchange and a bridge for Sino-Indian friendship".

YUN and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations signed the cooperation memorandum during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's May visit to China.

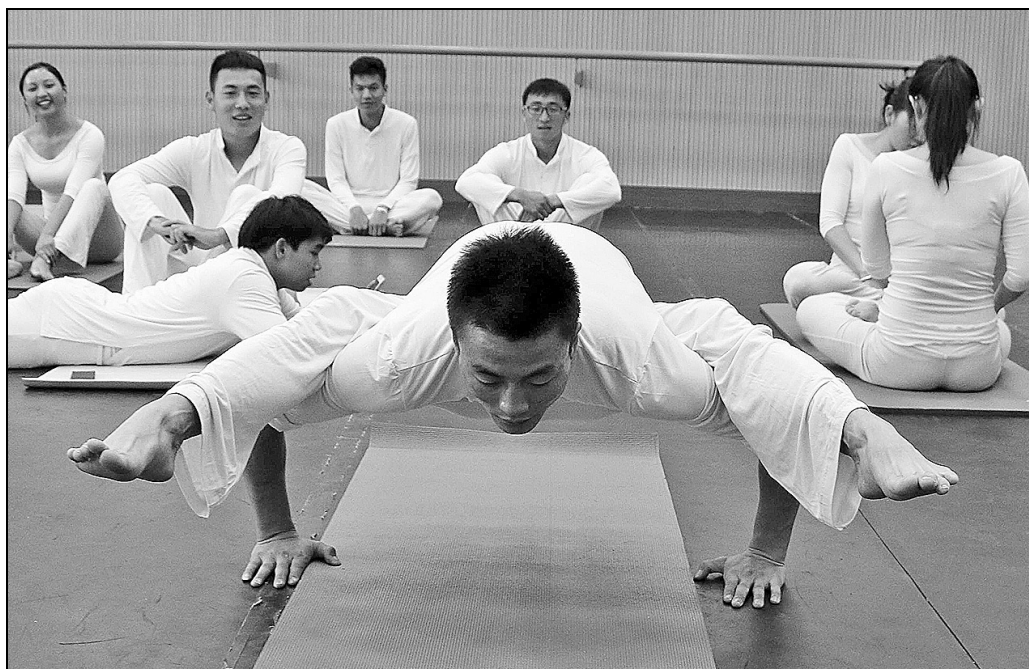
The college will not start enrolling students until August, according to Fan Jing, director of international affairs at YUN.

Fan explained that YUN has a long-term history of cooperation and cultural exchanges with India. It is one of eight institutions in China, and the only one in Southwest China, offering Hindi as a language major.

"YUN has sent around 30 of its Hindi language students to study in India for a year since 2011," Fan said.

In 2011, they studied at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India in Gujarat state, where Modi, a yoga enthusiast, was chief minister from 2001 to 2014.

"The arrival of our students was covered by the local



Students do yoga in Yunnan University of Nationalities in Kunming. The university established the country's first yoga college on Saturday and the college will start enrolling students in August. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

"If a standard curriculum is set up, ... we could start enrolling high school graduates."

Fan Jing, director of international affairs at YUN

media, and Modi met our students at that time. So he knew our school," Fan said. "The Chinese students President Xi Jinping met during his visit to

India visit last year were mainly from our school."

Over the years, YUN has established a good relationship with the consulate general of India to the point where students and teachers can obtain their Indian visas within 48 hours, Fan said.

Courses set

Yoga courses have been offered by the College of Ethnic Minority Sports at YUN for a few years. Two yoga teachers, trained in the United States, have instructed about 6,000 students in the university.

"Our experience of yoga education has also given us credit and confidence in the cooperation," Fan said.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations will send two teachers to design the curriculum for a short-term course, defined as three to six months, and a long-term course, lasting 12 months.

There will be three classes. The elementary class will require 120 class hours to earn a certificate; the intermediate class will require 240 hours; and the advanced, 360 hours. In addition to yoga practice, there will be classes on Indian culture and philosophy.

All students who enroll at the college will have the chance to study at the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga in India, and those who

qualify will be granted international yoga training certificates. "Students can also apply for scholarships from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations," Fan said.

With China still lacking an accepted yoga standard, the Indian teachers will help standardize yoga techniques, Fan said.

"If a standard curriculum is set up, and our diploma becomes recognized by our education authorities, we could start enrolling high school graduates," she said.

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TAIWAN

Polling shows viable candidate

By BLOOMBERG



Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang took a step closer to naming its nominee for next year's Taiwan leadership elections after polling over the weekend showed that the current "vice-president" of the legislature is a viable candidate.

The survey, conducted on Friday and Saturday to gauge how favorably voters viewed Hung Hsiu-chu and how she might fare against the opposition party's nominee, found she could win, Kuomintang Secretary-General Lee Shu-chuan said at a news conference on Sunday. The party's central committee will meet on Wednesday to finalize a roster to be put before a party congress on Friday, where a formal nomination will take place.

"I can't think of any scenario in which I won't be nominated by my party," Hung told reporters after the results were announced. "I will work harder to earn everyone's support before the national congress meeting."

The election, scheduled for Jan 16, will mark the exit of the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou, who was first elected in 2008 and served the two-term limit. One of the main issues will be Taiwan's relationship with the Chinese mainland — with the KMT more in favor of improving ties than the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party.

In April, the DPP named chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen, who ran against Ma in 2012, as its nominee for leadership.

Two of the KMT's most senior members, Chairman

"I hope the two female contenders can give people a brand-new campaign and set a new model of democracy."

Hung Hsiu-chu, the KMT's nominee for Taiwan election

Eric Chu and legislative speaker Wang Jin-pyng, have said they won't seek the party nomination.

"If I am nominated by KMT, I hope the two female contenders can give people a brand-new campaign and set a new model of democracy," Hung said, referring to Tsai.

Hung, who has served as the deputy leader of the legislature since 2012, called last week for the signing of a peace agreement with the Chinese mainland in a party address, the Taipei-based Central News Agency reported. Hung was previously a high school teacher and holds a master's degree in education from Northeast Missouri State University, according to her profile on the legislature's website.

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