What is Yoga?

- The word ‘yoga’ derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.
- Yoga cultivates the ways of maintaining a balanced attitude in day-to-day life and endows skill in the performance of one’s actions.
- Yoga is a union of physical, mental as well as spiritual practices and disciplines that is said to have originated in India almost 5,000 years ago.
- The Number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati valley civilization with Yogic motives and figures performing Yoga Sadhana suggest the presence of Yoga in ancient India.
- While Yoga finds a mention in the Rig-Veda, it became more prominent as hatha yoga texts emerged around the 11th century.
- Yoga includes Asanas, Mudras, Kriyas, Shaktakarmas and Meditation.

Why is yoga needed in present conflicting times?

- Yoga asana’s and spirituality transcends religious, regional and virtually all forms of barriers.
- It helps to seek humanity in diversity – responsible consumerism (SDG 12) with social well-being.
- The concept of “VasudhaivKutumbkam” is inherently linked with sustainable life style which is a major component of Yoga.

Promotion of India’s soft power in the form of Yoga

- This is aimed at meeting the country’s foreign policy objectives and showing its

willingness to play a bigger role in global politics.

- While previous Indian governments understood and recognized the value of soft power to further India’s foreign policy goals, attempts have been largely ad hoc.
- However, the way Yoga diplomacy is rolled out (even bypassing Buddhist diplomacy in its social media coverage), it clearly tells the word that India’s soft power is important.
- Yoga has become nothing less than a geopolitical tool.