

'Gurus have become entrepreneurs'

Oct 31: Sadguru Jagga Vasudeva is a name that has featured at many an international leadership forums, where he has delivered speeches on diplomacy, economic development, education and environment, among other subjects. For his vision and understanding of modern social and economic issues, he is often referred to as an 'ultra modern guru'.

The Sadguru, who was in the City to address an international conference, spared some time to talk to The New Indian Express and spoke about Isha Foundation and the silent revolution his organisation has sparked. "Most of our work is concentrated in the rural areas. However, to make a change in the society, there has to be a change in leadership. Several years ago, military leadership had an upper hand. Then came the democratic leadership, where the leaders are backed by several other people. Now economic leadership is becoming

more significant," says the guru. "Economic standards are going up. We will be living in slums if economic leaders do not take care of things. I will say, 60 per cent of India is living below the poverty line. Now, although, there is an economic surge that has been fired off by the IT sector, a very small percentage of our population is in the revolution," he adds. As such, his foundation has been working on rural education programmes, giving due weightage to computer education.

The Sadhguru, for over a decade now, has been spearheading a silent revolution at his Isha Foundation in the Velliangiri mountains near Coimbatore. He and his volunteers have been working not only to educate the villagers in the state but have also been promoting a mass reforestation programme called Project Green Hands. That apart, he has been advocating yoga for inner engineering. Sadhguru Jagga Vasudeva

says he propagates no philosophy, ideology or religion, just a technology for inner well being. "Everybody wants to have a joyful and pleasant life. The experience of life is determined by what is happening within you. With the senses that you have, you are oriented to see the outside and not the inside. To sense your inner selves, you have to turn your attention inward and this calls for commitment," he says. Yoga, he says, is a method for this. "Yoga is not about unimaginable postures or standing on your head. Yog means union and it helps experience everything around yourself as 'you'. It is total harmony," he explains.

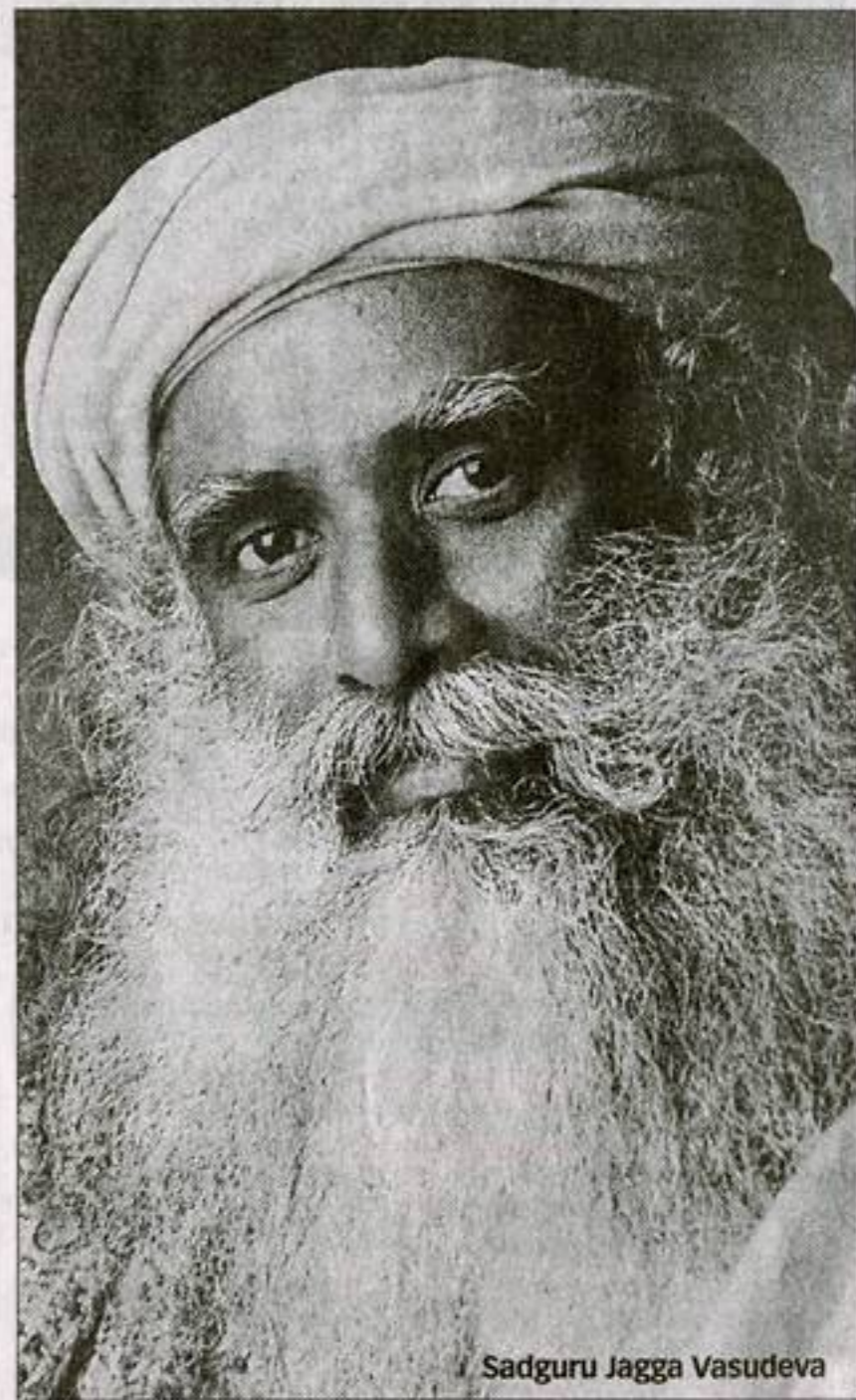
When asked if spiritual gurus are becoming more of lifestyle gurus, he quite agrees with it and says, "I'll say, they have become entrepreneurs. There's nothing good or bad about it." However he rules out the similarity between religion and spirituality. He says, there is a differ-

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ence between the two. In religion, you have believers, because one does not know certain things and does not want to admit it. You become spiritual when you realize you do not know and become a seeker. What a believer wants is solace and the seeker is in pursuit of knowledge," says the Sadguru.

However, he agrees that spirituality is coming back into the society.

More and more people are satisfying their materialistic well being and still not finding fulfillment. This is what makes them look inward. •ENS



Sadguru Jagga Vasudeva