

UN World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims - 16 November 2014 Service Report

On 16 November 2014, the third Sunday of November which has been declared by the United Nations as the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, Brahma Kumaris organised various events all over the world to show case the importance of road safety through spirituality and observed collective meditation through International Meditation Hour from 6.30 PM to 7.30 PM local time. Holding seminars, exhibitions, talks by experts supported by slides/short films/animations/videos, silence street processions, candle lighting in memory of the departed souls, sharing of chilling experiences as a survivor of road accident, or as an affected family member, as a passenger or as a pedestrian, as an onlooker, as a driver or as an administrator or as a para-medical and a powerful collective meditation at a stipulated hour marked the memorable events of the day. The meditation hour was dedicated to harness spiritual power and send subtle, strong vibrations of pure love, peace and power to the victims of road accidents all over the world.

Reports from some participating countries are shared as under -

Australia

Perth - About 30 people gathered in the evening at the Perth Brahma Kumaris Center in Shenton Park, Western Australia to pay a silent tribute to those who lost their lives on roadways, their families and to all those unsung warriors who attend to such gory, sudden and unpleasant scenes day in and day out. A beautiful exhibit was displayed of a large heart made of rose petals on a table fondly holding photographs of the loved ones lost in such accidents. With soft music, silence and specially chosen words, a dignified and thoughtful memorial was created for this special day of remembrance. Feelings of love, goodwill, peace and power were sent as a powerful vibration to these victims as well all those others around the globe.



Kenya



Serve Africa Retreat Center, Nairobi: Slideshows, video-animations and speeches were arranged for the day. Mr. Kibuga, Asst. Superintendent of Police (Traffic Operations), Nairobi, informed the gathering about the continuous education and training offered by the Kenya Traffic Department and also shared his experience on road accidents. He expressed the concern of Government of Kenya over the

increasing number of road accidents and the dire need to educate people on precautions to be observed before and while driving. As a follow up programme, a group of senior traffic officers attended a stress free living programme hosted by Nairobi centre on Thursday 20 November from 10 am to 12 noon at the Traffic Police headquarters which was well received. As a result, the officers are now really keen on doing it at their individual police stations.

Malaysia:

Penang: At a small, cosy affair at the Brahma Kumaris centre, the World Peace Hour was dedicated to the souls who were victims of road traffic accidents. Little, tiny lights lit in the Hall radiated celestial calm.

Mauritius

Curepipe – A guided tour of an exhibition on 'Road Safety through Self-Transformation' was organised from 10.00 hrs to 16.00 hrs followed by a collective meditation from 16.00 hrs to 17.00 hrs. Bookmarks and stickers depicting road safety guidelines were distributed. People shared their accident experiences and signed pledges to observe road safety rules and regulations. Many people from all walks of life including children, parents, eminent personalities, Councillors of Curepipe and Police Officers took part in meditation and felt empowered. Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation interviewed Mr. Ben Buntipilly, Special Advisor on Road Safety matters at the Road Safety Unit of the Prime Minister's Office and BK Geeta, Coordinator of BKWSU, Curepipe. Every one expressed gratitude to Brahma Kumaris for organising such an event.



Russia

Moscow- A Short video on road safety norms violation by motorists and pedestrians as characteristic of Russian society was used as an educational tool to highlight the present road conditions of the country and the pressing need for change. Lighting candles, offers of red roses and a poem about the value of life, the immortal 'Ave Maria' by F. Schubert and live music created an atmosphere of powerful silence catapulting the participants into an eternal bliss. The guest speaker Bariyenikov Eugeny Mikhaylovich, Dy. Head of the Center of the highest driving skills, emphasized that practice of spiritual values such as respect, love, cooperation that are extremely necessary for improving road traffic conditions. Many shared personal experiences and all those present agreed that our safety is in our hands and it was suggested to start with the self. In silence, the audience attentively listened to the words of the road safety pledge that was wholeheartedly accepted by all.



South Africa

Lenasia, Johannesburg - Amongst road experiences shared by participants, the experience of Atish Lalla, a young man aged 23 years was very inspiring. Candles were lighted in memory of road accident victims by their family members. A message by the MEC for Gauteng Mr. Ismail Vadi shared that a broader civil society campaign is needed to raise awareness and consciousness about road safety as most road accidents are entirely avoidable; it's more about attitude and behavior.



Spain:

Barcelona: The Association of Victims for the Prevention of Road Accidents invited members of the Brahma Kumaris to an interfaith program, and a representative of the Association shared valuable insights at the world meditation hour at the Brahma Kumaris center.

Sri Lanka

- a) **Kotahena** - At the programme featuring 70 attendees, a video show was followed by talks on road safety by Mr. Karunaratne, Traffic Police Sergeant of Kotahena and by Dr.Viji on role of meditation in road safety. Candles were lighted in memory of the road victims.
- b) **Kandy**- Mr.Rathnayaka, Asst. Superintendent of Kandy Police and Dr. Wendy Holmes presided the evening, while Sub Inspector Mr. Bandara delivered a talk on precautions to be observed by drivers as well as pedestrians on the road. 100 leaflets highlighting the essentials of road safety were distributed and also displayed at public places like Supermarkets, Police Stations, Railway Stations, Government Offices etc.
- c) **Batticaloa** - Mr. Kanakasuntharam (Operations Manager for Eastern Region of C.T.B.), Mr. Jayaratne (Traffic Police Sergeant of Batticaloa), Mr. Raveendran (Retired Chief Accountant of Police Station, Batticaloa), Mr. Ranjithamoorthy (Director General of BDCCIA, Batticaloa) were the dignitaries who shared the dias and the urgent need for implementing road safety measures reflected in their words. In meditation, tributes were offered to all those affected in road crashes.
- d) **Nuwara Eliya**- A Group of road safety messengers from the Brahma Kumaris visited Nuwara Eliya Town Auto and Van stands and spread road safety awareness to the drivers. This inspired 26 citizens to join the group and together they visited 6 places to spread road safety awareness among the masses.
- e) **Jaffna**- A powerful guided meditation was organised from 9.30 am to 10.30 am to pay tributes to the accident victims followed by a silent procession on the Brown Road giving good wishes and vibrations of love and peace to all the vehicles for a safe journey.



Trinidad and Tobago:

Chaguanas: Distinguished members of the civil society came together on a common platform at the Raja Yoga Centre in Chaguanas where the message from the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon on the year's theme 'Speed Kills' was read. The message laid emphasis on the fact that 'As we aim to slow traffic, we are accelerating global action against road crashes'. Miss Alicia Waithe, a representative from 'Arrive Alive' read the message by their President which stated that the NGO will continue to be the voice of all the victims who quietly suffer in the privacy of their homes and workplace and strive to make the nation's roads safer. The evening was spent as an opportunity to harness thought energy through meditation spreading peace to the country, to offer emotional and spiritual support and to pledge for road safety in tribute to victims and survivors of road crashes.



U.S.A

New York- The event organised at Elmhurst Hospital Center Auditorium, in the borough of Queens, New York was held under the auspices of Brahma Kumaris' affiliation with the United Nations. The program unfolded in such a way as to hear different perspectives, stories and experiences of local emergency responders, teachers and other participants. These first hand narrations were interspersed with moments of silent reflection when some beautiful media pieces expressed in a deep and gentle way, the effects of road accidents. Dr. Kala Iyengar, a certified Board Pediatrician addressed the audience with an inspiring talk on many different practical tips for safety, but also highlighted that if something does happen, one must be in a state of mind where s/he can be calm and make the right judgments and decisions. The audience also interacted with each other, shared their own experience and reflections by writing on a card – a road safety behavior – that they would practice to honor our own lives and the lives of others. Candles were lighted in memory of the road accident victims and a silent yet powerful meditation hour followed.



India:

Programmes in India featured a broad spectrum of activities including Collaborations with like-minded NGOs, Experiences of victims and survivors, Public Awareness Rallies, Candle Light Meditations, Pledge Drives, Peace March, Educative activities for Children, Public Programmes, Distribution of Hand Bills and motivational messages from high profile government representatives. The reported events spanned the geographical range of the country, with programmes being organized at **New Delhi** (Delhi), **Mumbai, Thane, Miraj** (Maharashtra), **Indore** and **Narsinghpur** (Madhya Pradesh), **Hyderabad, Secunderabad** (Telangana), **Bidar** (Karnataka), **Panaji** (Goa), **Lucknow** (Uttar Pradesh), **Narnaul** (Haryana), **Rajkot** and **Navsari** (Gujarat), **Muzaffarpur** (Bihar), **Tamluk** and **Kharagpur** (West Bengal) and **Sundargarh** (Orissa). Some visual glimpses of the events in India follow.



Mumbai: Pankaja Munde, Cabinet Minister, Govt. of Mah.



Goa: Hon'ble Governor of Goa Ms. Mridula Sinha



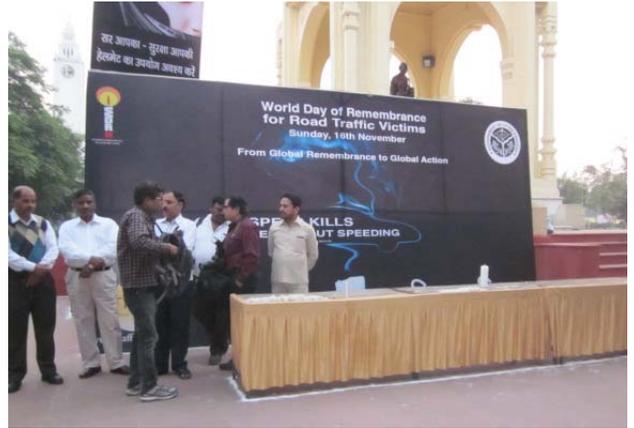
Miraj, Mah: Public Programme



Narsinghpur, MP: Extending gift to Chief Guest



Rajkot, Gujarat: Road Safety Pledge with PSI's



Lucknow, UP: Public Event with Transport Commissioner



Tamluk, West Bengal: Brief address to a large audience



Secunderabad, Telangana: Event with Bro Dilip Patro, Director – The Ability People



Thane, Mah.: Silent Meditation offering vibes of peace



New Delhi: Candle Lighting in Remembrance of Victims