



Participants of the driving skills challenge on the Higher Colleges of Technology campus in Dubai sign a pledge to obey the road safety rules. — Supplied photos

# Speeding is just so uncool

Students attend driving skills challenge

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DUBAI — Though the young are generally known for driving at a speed of over 120kms/hour, being reckless on the road is not that 'cool' for several youngsters.

Take Zubair Ahsan, a 23-year-old student of Media and Communication at Manipal University for instance. He has been driving for two years and believes that he can control his vehicle very well because he maintains his speed. "Last year alone I happened to drive 100,000 kilometres and so far I have never been in an accident. Speeding is something that really scares me. I get nightmares about it," said Ahsan.

Several college-going students who participated for a driving skills challenge competition held at the Higher College of Technology, Academic City campus, said that speeding and reckless driving are not challenges all youngsters indulge in.

Organised by FedEx Express, Ciel Marketing and Events and endorsed by Dubai Police and the Emirates Motor Sports Federation, the driving skills challenge was organised to share safe driving habits among the youth of the UAE.

The awareness campaign was conducted across Dubai-based universities between March 17 and 25.

Eligible students chosen by their respective colleges also participated in a driving competition that focused on cautious driving skills rather than speed. The universities participating in the programme were Higher Colleges of Technology Dubai Women's Campus, Higher Colleges of Technology Dubai Men's Campus, BITS Pilani, American University in Dubai and Manipal University. Over 375 students attended the informative talk by a Road Safety Instructor who highlighted vari-



The competition focused on the skills to drive safely.

ous aspects such as driver awareness, seating position, seat belt and mobile phone use while driving, and maintaining a distance between vehicles.

"There is a dire need to educate youth about cultivating safe driving habits and instill the need to remain focused on skill rather than speed. For students in the age group of 17 to 24, the biggest problem would be over-confidence. What they must understand is that there is nothing called a 'perfect driver'. Students just aim to be normal drivers and not risk takers. Driving skills only get better with experience and in an event like this they are faced with a reality check," said Roshanara Sait, director, Ciel Marketing and Events.

However, a few students like Sadaf Rizwi said it was only after a major accident that they learnt to drive right: "I met with a major accident on Emirates Road in 2010, where my car totalled. Fortunately nothing horrible happened. But since then I have been very scared and I started driving again only after several months," said Rizwi.

Another student Kevin Alexan-

der said: "My driving technique has definitely changed since I attended the programme. I used to speed a lot, but now I will try and be more careful."

The Dubai Police were also represented at the event and encouraged the students to respect road rules. The students signed a pledge and promised to follow several simple, yet important road rules.

The driving instructor highlighted to students that there is a need to adopt the Safe Driving Triangle by the students, which focuses on confidence, awareness and anticipation. The graphic videos displayed to the students highlighted the risks of using mobile phones. Six skilled winners, from both male and female categories, were appointed as Road Safety Ambassadors in their colleges: "Safe driving is the responsibility of all motorists. This is especially true for FedEx Express couriers. Managing package pick-up and meeting delivery commitments when faced with traffic problems and road conditions are not always easy tasks," said Nathalie Amiel, Vice-President FedEx Customer Experience EMEA.

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