

Youngsters are confident but careless at the wheel

Campaign to help young drivers

University students will be shown how to be better drivers in a bid to reduce fatal crashes

Ramona Ruiz

DUBAI // A new initiative that promotes safe driving habits among youth will focus on cautious driving skills.

The campaign, launched on Sunday by FedEx and supported by Dubai Police and the Emirates Motor Sports Federation, will run until March 25. More than 2,000 students at five Dubai-based universities will attend interactive lectures and participate in a simulator experience.

About 375 students turned up for the opening at the Indian university, Bits Pilani.

The four other participating universities include Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) Dubai Women's Campus, the American University in Dubai, Manipal University and HCT Dubai Men's Campus.

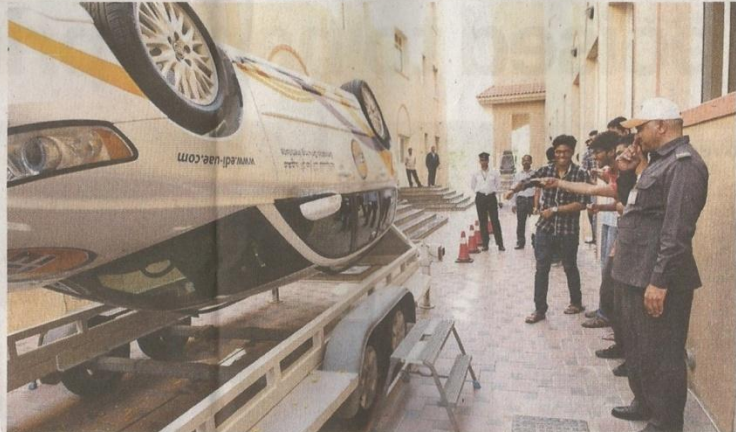
"Most young drivers think they are confident but don't have the awareness and anticipation," said Roshanara Sait, a road safety expert and director of Ciel Marketing and Events, which organised the campaign. "There's no point in being confident when you don't have the other two."

The programme includes theory, visuals and a driving challenge.

Topics include common causes of accidents, road fatalities, and the psychology of driving. It also covers stopping distances and the three-second rule – a simple way to check you are at a safe distance from the car in front. A simulated roll-over will show the benefits of seat belts.

A series of graphic videos will also be shown on the dangers of texting and driving, along with a "shocking" video on driving standards.

Talks also include distractions,



The roll-over experience, a simulator, helps students at Bits Pilani realise the advantages of wearing seat belts. More than 2,000 students will participate in the campaign. Photo courtesy Ciel Marketing and Events

RTA makes right turns into schools

Since the start of the academic year, the RTA has held 43 school events including lectures, training workshops, brochure distribution and screenings of animated films.

The aim of the events is to nurture a generation that is aware of traffic issues and committed to following road rules and guidance, said Hussain Al Banna, director of traffic at the Roads and Transport Authority.

"Improving traffic attitudes of students is a top priority of the traffic awareness drive. Dubai schools have witnessed no school-related accident fatalities over the past four years."

Among the programmes is School Friends, which teaches children in nurseries and primary schools how to board a bus and safely cross roads.

The School Events programme is aimed at intermediate and secondary

pupils, and school bus drivers, and focuses on using seat belts, the risks of excessive speed and the importance of complying with traffic rules.

The agency also plans to expand Traffic Track, launched recently at Al Aqsa School, in which pupils are introduced to traffic and how to protect themselves from accidents.

★ Mohammed N Al Khan

such as the use of mobile phones and loud music, and blind spots. The 45-minute presentation provides an overview on aggression on the roads. The programme will culminate with a FedEx driving skills challenge competition on March

25 at the HCT Dubai Men's Campus, with each university nominating a team of 16 members.

The students will experience manoeuvres to improve their car handling abilities, work towards improving their driving techniques

and understand the concept of using skill over speed. Six winners – three male and three female – will be appointed as "road safety ambassadors".

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