

SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

2016

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a renowned spiritual leader and global humanitarian whose mission of uniting the world into a violence-free, stress-free, global family has inspired millions of people to broaden their share of responsibility and serve society.

Sri Sri has devised practical tools and techniques that help individuals achieve calmness of mind and clarity of thought. Such a state of mind empowers individuals to achieve their goals and instills a sense of service and greater connectedness with humanity.

In 1981, Sri Sri established the Art of Living Foundation, an educational organization with a presence in over 156 countries. The Foundation's individual development programs offer powerful tools to eliminate stress and foster a sense of well-being.

In 1997, Sri Sri founded the International Association for Human Values (IAHV), a humanitarian organization, which promotes societal responsibility and human values in political, economic and social spheres.

IAHV and the Art of Living Foundation collaborate on several humanitarian initiatives, including conflict resolution, disaster and trauma relief, environmental conservation, anti-corruption, prisoner rehabilitation, youth leadership, women's empowerment and universal education. Both organizations enjoy special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.



2016
IN REVIEW



The whole world is one family, so it is necessary that we live with naturalness and simplicity; only then life blossoms. The wall that we erect between ourselves and others needs to be demolished. From your side, drop all inhibitions between you and others.

JANUARY

India Honours Sri Sri with the Padma Vibhushan

New Delhi, India, Jan. 25



One of India's highest civilian awards, The Padma Vibhushan, was conferred on Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Speaking to media after the awards were announced

Sri Sri said; "This award is not for a person or personality but for the principle of a 'one world family' where human values are rekindled for our collective happiness and peace. I dedicate this award to all those who work for the same cause."

Sri Sri has been the recipient of several awards including the highest state awards from Mongolia (Order of the Pole Star), Paraguay (National Order of Merito de Comuneros) and Columbia (Orden de la Democracia Simón Bolívar).

Gurudev Negotiates Solution for Shani Temple Sanctum Sanctorum

Mumbai, India, Jan. 27



When a national debate opened up regarding prohibition of entry of women into the sanctum sanctorum of the Shani Shingnapur temple in Ahmednagar district, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar stepped out in support of the women activists against gender bias. Sri Sri said, "Women are justified in seeking to enter the sacred sanctum of the temple as there is no sanction to gender discrimination in our scriptures. Different temples follow different rules, but if men can enter a place of worship, women can also do so. There is no scriptural sanction for any gender discrimination."

Maintaining his fair and just approach to every issue, Sri Sri further stated, "We need to educate our people that women and men have equal rights. Awareness (on gender equality) has to be created, scriptures have to be understood properly. It is the work of religious and spiritual leaders to make people understand. Though they may be following some traditions, it has no scriptural injunction."

FEBRUARY

Chennai: Launch of 'Pudhu Malarchi'
Feb. 9-10

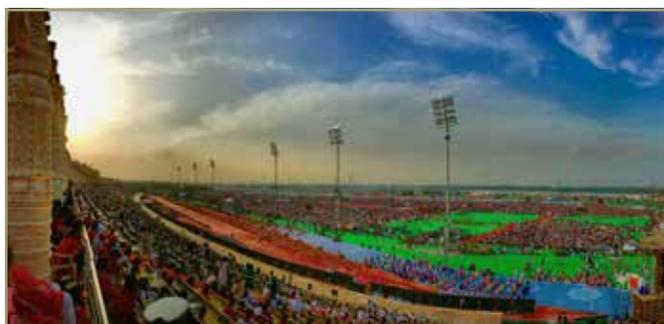


During his two-day-visit to Chennai, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar announced several social welfare

initiatives titled "Pudhu Malarchi". This initiative included unveiling of The Art of Living Legal Cell - Tamil Nadu Chapter, which is to bring a host of advantages to every strata of society from children to rural people on the outskirts of the city.

The other initiatives announced were: "Happy Child, Happy Chennai", Naganadhi river rejuvenation, rehabilitation program for the flood-affected, development of the Melanur village in Tiruvallur district, the Youth Leadership Training Program; life-skills training at Perumbakkam and Okkiyam Thoraipakkam slum re-settlements, among others.

The World Culture Festival
March 11-13, 2016



The largest and biggest celebration of mankind was witnessed by 3.75 million people from 155 countries in Delhi on March 11- 13 to mark 35 years of The Art of Living.

The festival symbolised harmonious co-existence and celebrated diversity by bringing together the power of the people on a common platform. It was a celebration in true sense with the vibrancy of dance and the serenity of music.

Marking the momentous occasion, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said, "In India we have always dreamt of the world as one family. Today that dream seems to be taking shape into reality - "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - We are all one. People have come from far and wide - right from Argentina, Mongolia, Pakistan, Nepal etc. Today we are giving out a very strong



message of oneness to the whole world when it is so much needed; when there is so much gap between communities, nations, between ideologies etc.”

The festivities included glorious symphonies of 8500 artists, a spectacular Kathak ensemble of 1000 artists, Cosmic Rhythm comprising 30 dance forms performed by over 4600 artists, ancient chants of peace, thousands of dignitaries and a sea of humanity.

Day 2 of the World Culture Festival reverberated with hope that the world can come together and work towards peace despite differences in faiths and beliefs. The Festival witnessed many faith and spiritual leaders coming together to promote the message of harmony. Amongst those in presence were H.E. Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Holy See (Vatican); Mufti Muhammad Saeed Khan, Islamic Scholar and Founder of Madani Trust, Pakistan and H.H. Swami Agnivesh Ji, Founder, Bandhua Mukti Morcha.

What they said about WCF..

“The World Culture Festival is like the Kumbh Mela of art and cultures. I compliment Gurudev for completing this mission of service since 35 years in over 150 countries. Through Art of Living the world has got to know about India.”

Hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi

“Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has worked tirelessly to spread the message of India’s culture to every corner of this world.”

Hon. Rajnath Singh, Home Minister, India.

“To my left is the honourable Grand Mufti from Syria, and to my right the venerable Bishop Gunnar Stalsett. There are Sufi saints and also the Shankaracharyas. Someone addresses in Arabic, someone in English, someone conveys their message in Chinese and someone else in Hindi. Yet their message is one and the same regardless of the language.”

Hon. Sushma Swaraj, Honorable Minister for External Affairs, India

This massive gathering, once again, from the land of ancient civilization, India, has sent a message that the world is one family. ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’. This massive gathering is a fitting tribute to the service of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji, who has contributed a lot in spreading peace, harmony and love all over the world.

Kamal Thapa, Deputy PM, Nepal

My hope is that this may serve as a stepping stone towards helping us to rise above our lower nature and above our individual consciousness, as individuals and as nations, which will make one indeed

proclaim the Sanskrit verse, “Udara charitanam tu vasudhaiva kutumbhakam”.

H.E. Michael A.S. Adhin, Vice-President of Suriname

It is wonderful and inspiring to witness such an enormous number of people gathered to meditate and appreciate music, singing and folk arts.

- H.H. Shiekh Mohammed Bin Mabarak Al Shariqi, Ruler of Fujairah

From Mecca and Medina, the homeland of all holy prophets, and from Damascus, I salute India and its people, and all the people over here, I salute you now. World peace will be spread all over.

Dr. Ahmad Badreddin Hassoun, Grand Mufti & Chairman of the Supreme Iftaa Council, Syrian Arab Republic

Buddhist, Hindus, Muslims, Jews and of course people from the religion I share, Christianity, give an incredible testimony that The Art of Living helps people to get more in whatever faith or tradition they follow. You help people to live in their faith ever more intimately and personally.

H.E. Bishop Marcelo Sanchez Sorondo, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Holy See (Vatican)

With the efforts of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji, by organising this World Cultural Festival, the misgivings among communities can be effectively dispelled and inter community harmony established. The very participation of divergent groups reflects the need for peace today in the international community.

- Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji

This grand festival is great effort in achieving this noble principle, and in fact an exposition of our great culture. He (Gurudev) has improved the quality of life of millions of people on the foundation of this great culture.

Hon. P. J. Kurien, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, India

The international religious and diverse cultural harmony has been co-created by The Art of Living foundation for 35 years. This is the largest inter-faith gathering in the history of the world, a One World Community.

Lawrence Carter, Professor of Religion, Morehouse College, U.S.A

The greatness of Gurudev is that he has brought the entire world to India, and to Indraprastha (an old name for the city of New Delhi) the capital of the country.

Hon. Venkaiah Naidu, Minister for Urban Development, India

Till today, I have never seen such a vast sea of people in my life. People have come together from Argentina to Russia; from Kenya to Germany; from Nepal to Bangladesh; from Pakistan to Sri Lanka; from USA to Europe and then of course India herself! This is true diversity.

Hon. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, India

Today, I wish to tell Gurudev that after watching this program, not only India but the entire world has been mesmerized. An event of such a large scale and magnitude has perhaps never been organized anywhere else in the world.

Hon. Amit Shah, President of the Bharatiya Janata Party

The message of Vasudev Kutumbakam will spread from here. Tonnes of congratulations.

Hon. Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of Lok Sabha, India

Global Leadership Forum

As a part of the World Cultural Festival, 2016, a two day mega event was held in New Delhi on 12th and 13th March, 2016



The two day mega ‘Global Leadership Forum’ kicked off its Day 1 with power packed sessions which saw senior global leaders discussing paradigms of leadership and role of leaders in the current geopolitical and economic landscape. This forum brought together communities and countries for a sustainable world of the future.

Held under the aegis of the World Culture Festival, the forum saw prominent leaders in deep discussions on issues such as the role of the government in managing natural and human resources and also relations with countries and organizations worldwide; the role of digital and economic progression in creating the reality of ‘Boundaryless Nations’; examining the need to pursue a farsighted approach to tracking business trends, amongst others.



Inaugurating the forum, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said, “A leader always walks the last, and makes everyone move ahead. A leader is not meant to create followers, rather to create leaders. This is the concept of Bodhi Sattva - which originated in

India and Nepal. A leader will always seek challenges. Youthfulness to me means challenges. It keeps you on your toes, this is what awakens your youthful energy. It inspires you to come up with more enthusiasm and energy, beyond your normal capacity.

Day 2 of the ‘Global Leadership Forum’ saw world leaders deliberating the need for decisive leadership to create trusted communities and a connected world. The forum highlighted the need for better implementation of social capital, sustainable and developing economies with an active involvement of women.

2000 Interfaith Leaders Called on to Promote Solar Energy **Bengaluru, India, March 17**

During the Inter-faith meet held at the Bengaluru International Center, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar urged 2000 inter-faith leaders to support the International Solar Alliance, to promote generation and usage of solar energy in their institutions, communities and countries and to mitigate effects of climate change.

The Art of Living has recognised the runaway effects of climate change on the global environment, by launching multiple campaigns to prevent environmental degradation and appeals to the world-wide inter-faith community to congregate in affirming the ‘Declaration of Support to International Solar Alliance’.

2000 Vainikas Perform on a Single Stage **Bengaluru, India March 19**

2000 vainikas (veena maestros and artists) performed at The Art of Living International Center in Bengaluru, India. The event was organized as part of the organization’s 35 years of service to humanity and to give an impetus to the arts.

The spectacular 2000-member veena performance



had artistes as young as 10 years, going up to over 80 years and from across the five southern states of India: Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telengana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

"To have 2,000 veenas playing together at a time like this is almost impossible, it is incredible that The Art of Living has taken up such an incredible feat. We have been preparing to play at the event for over six months now. Such events bring in so much enthusiasm among artists and students. The concert has brought veena to the world," said one of the vainikas, Prof. S. Balambal.

MAY

The Art of Living Celebrate Gurudev's Birthday with Service Activities

May 13

Volunteers across India and in different parts of the world conducted blood donation camps, medical camps, food distribution drives, tree plantation and cleaning drives benefiting citizens as birthday greetings for Gurudev poured in from around the world.

The country's ancient heritage was celebrated on the occasion through performances by Indian musical

maestros and yoga masters including Pandit Santhosh Sant and Pandit Ronu Majumdar on the flute, Pandit Anindo Chatterjee and Anubrata Chatterjee on the tabla, Purbayan Chatterjee on the sitar and Sivamani on the drums performed to mark the launch of a classical music album.

Gurudev was also bestowed the 'The BrandLaureate Hall of Fame-Lifetime Achievement Award 2016' by the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation for his service to humanity as part of his vision of a violence-free and stress-free world.

"I have never seen a birthday being celebrated with such a multitude of people. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a man of great honor, character, and integrity. He has benefited millions through his selfless contribution. He is creating a better world for us. He is sharing his life with all of us, bringing peace and unity all over the world," said Dr. KK Johan, President of BrandLaureate Foundation. Previous recipients include late H.E. Nelson Mandela, Hillary Clinton, Steve Jobs, Sir Ratan Tata, Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, Ben Bernanke, and Philip Kotler.

Visits Sri Lanka, Urges Reconciliation

May



"For reconciliation, you need to drop the past and move ahead. For that, you need inner strength and spirituality can give you that strength. That's what we promise to do," said Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

when asked about the repatriation of Tamilians in Sri Lanka at a press conference in Colombo on May 17, 2016.

“Bring the much-needed healing touch to the population, re-instil the confidence among each other and among the community. I am ready to do whatever is necessary to achieve this goal.”

Gurudev also spoke about working with youth to increase their potential, develop their skills and encourage the indigenous system of medicine. Emphasizing on the importance of harmony amongst people, Gurudev said: “Everybody must come together - in all ethnic, religious backgrounds. People must see that in unity there is strength, progress and prosperity. No community can grow in isolation and be happy.”

Later, Gurudev met with President Maithripala Sirisena, Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe and the former President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa. He also interacted with children from two orphanages run by The Art of Living. On a two-day visit to Sri Lanka, Gurudev inaugurated the Seetha Eliya Amman Temple in Nuweralia on May 18, 2016.



Gurudev has visited the island nation on numerous occasions - including during the war and visited refugees in the camps. He had called for peace and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and had urged the LTTE

to give up violence and engage in dialogue with the Sri Lankan government.

Inspired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar’s peace- building initiatives for healing and reconciliation, The Art of Living chapter in Sri Lanka continues to deliver its life-supporting programs to several hundred ex-LTTE combatants placed at the Boosa Prison and the rehabilitation centers in Omanthai and Maradamadu.

JUNE

Meditation 2.0 Tour of the United Kingdom June



Gurudev’s ‘Meditation 2.0’ tour schedule commenced with his address at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester on June 12 followed by his address in Leicester, at the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh and culminated at the Royal Albert Hall on Sunday, 19 June, where Suhel Seth, India’s theatre personality and a talk show specialist conducted a live conversation with Gurudev. At these venues, over 10,000 people heard Gurudev live and experienced meditation with him.

Gurudev was invited to talk about social cohesion, how to banish stress through meditation and how to resolve conflicts without aggression at various events.

Addressing business, finance and management professionals, Gurudev said: Sustainable growth and a human touch to business make the workplace more joyful, less stressful, that's what they are coming to. The paradigms are changing: young people want to be less regimented.

Gurudev's visit to the House of Commons was also noted by the local British community. The MP from Hendon, Matthew Offord invited his fellow Parliamentarians and co-hosted an event at the House of Commons with The Art of Living. Gurudev spoke on how to build a stress-free and a violence-free Britain.



Gurudev was also invited by the corporate Horasis at the International Festival for Business in Liverpool. Addressing leaders of the organization and at a plenary attending the festival, Gurudev spoke on rebuilding faith.

Gurudev also visited HM Tameside Prison for an interactive exchange with over 60 prisoners and 25 staff there. His Prison SMART program has been conducted there for 4 years and evaluated with extremely positive outcomes impressing both staff and prisoners alike. In this Interactive session with Gurudev, the staff and Prison SMART graduates had a lively exchange and directly posed questions to Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Get Happy Tour USA, June



June 24, 2016 saw Gurudev commencing the 10 city GET HAPPY tour from Washington DC. The Art of Living launched its newest offering in USA, "Get Happy" - a program developed to make the ancient practices of meditation accessible and relevant in today's fast paced life.

The participants had a chance to discover the "how" of lasting happiness, through Sudarshan Kriya - a simple yet powerful breathing technique that effortlessly draws an individual into a deep state of meditation.



"Get Happy" has been developed under the direction of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Trained instructors hosted the two-day immersive experience, where Gurudev Sri Sri

Ravi Shankar himself led a special session in ten cities across the U.S., starting on June 24 in Washington, D.C. Other cities included Boston, Columbus, Minneapolis, Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles and San Francisco, San Jose and Vancouver.

International Day of Yoga

June



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar inaugurated the International Day of Yoga celebrations at the European Parliament, Brussels. He interacted with members of parliament in a Q&A session and guided them through a meditation at the Yehudi Menuhin Hall.



As a prelude to the celebrations, The Art of Living initiated the 'Sun Never Sets on Yoga' campaign,

where Yoga enthusiasts from all over the world performed Sun Salutations at the strike of dawn in front of prominent landmarks from all over the globe including the India Gate; The Art of Living International center, Bengaluru; Worli Sea link, Mumbai; Chittorgarh fort; Zahran palace (Jordan), Patan Durbar square (Nepal); Lion City (Singapore); Victoria Harbor (Hong Kong) and other locations in Beirut (Lebanon), Belarus, Russia, New Zealand, Bhutan, Taiwan and Kazakhstan hallmarking the comprehensiveness of this ancient technique.

AUGUST

Sri Sri Teaches Sudarshan Kriya to 100,000 People

Bengaluru, August



From deaddiction centers in Punjab to remotest corners in Tripura and Assam, from Latur in Maharashtra to Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, from Jammu to Kanyakumari, over a 100,000 people connected virtually to learn secrets for a happy, joyful and stress-free life from Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Approximately, 1800 centers across India had organized The Art of Living's signature Happiness programs with Gurudev. This is the first time he

is teaching the Sudarshan kriya online, since the inception of The Art of Living.

Touching upon the current issues of youth suicide and depression, Gurudev shared a few practical principles to combat feelings of low-self esteem, interpersonal conflicts and violence. Sharing wisdom with humor, participants learnt the skill to be equanimous under praise or criticism.

SEPTEMBER

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Conferred the Acharya Mahapragya Ahimsa Samman by Jain Vishwa Bharati Sept. 9.



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was conferred the Acharya Mahapragya Ahimsa Samman. Gurudev is the first recipient of this award instituted by Jain Vishwa Bharati along with M.G Saraogi Foundation.

Gurudev was presented the award for his humanitarian contribution to world peace, promotion of human values and nonviolence.

The award has been established to recognise exemplary work done by individuals or organisations in promoting peace and nonviolence in the memory of His Holiness Acharya Mahapragyaji.

‘True Sportsmanship’ the Top Agenda at the 2nd World Summit on Ethics & Leadership in Sports in Zurich, Zurich, Sept. 19



“In the face of corruption, it is high time to wake up and take corrective measures. We should take life as a sport. Sports can play a major role in uniting the hearts and minds of people,” said Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, WFEB founder at the 2nd World Summit on Ethics & Leadership in Sports.

By organizing the 2nd World Summit on Ethics & Leadership in Sports, the Brussels-based World Forum for Ethics in Business (WFEB) not only focused on bringing attention to the critical challenges related to sports governance such as match fixing, doping and human rights issues, but also recognized the good that sports stands for by celebrating positive role models.



Prof. McLaren, WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) Special Investigator, Wilfried Lemke, Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development

and Peace for Sport, Ryszard Czarnecki, European Parliament's Vice President and 53 other world-class speakers gathered to mutually discuss and assess the current situation in the world of sports and explore the way forward.

The conference proceedings highlighted the conferment of the Ethics in Sports Award, a prize that recognized an outstanding individual, a team and an organization that have demonstrated the importance of human values and ethics in life and in the sports arena.

A day prior to the Summit, WFEB launched an Interdisciplinary Think Tank on Ethics and Leadership in Sports with participants from the European Council, European Parliament, FIFA, Transparency International, NOC Norway and more with the first focus lying on the organization of major sports events.

Colombian President Hails Sri Sri's Role in the Historic Ending of the 52-Year-Old War Between FARC-Colombian Govt.

Bogota, September



A 52-year-old war formally ended with the signing of the peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government in Cartagena de Indias on September 26. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was invited by the President & the FARC to be part of the ceremony.

"Thank you for everything you (Sri Sri) have done for the peace process. You have been a great support and friend of this process. All your help is very useful and your spiritual guidance is so important and I will be grateful forever," said H.E. President Santos to Sri Sri after the event.



Describing it as a moving moment for the people of Colombia & FARC, Gurudev said that the historic accord gave peace a chance. During his visit to Colombia, Gurudev also addressed a group of 500 social leaders inviting them to cultivate inner peace and support the peace process. In his meeting with the Minister of Post Conflict, Rafael Pardo he discussed ways to build peace and reconciliation.

The Director of the Victims Unit, Alan Jara and a group of 12 victims met Sri Sri to highlight the importance of teaching the Art of Living techniques to every member of the FARC. The Arhuacos indigenous community asked Sri Sri for his support to protect the environment in their territory, culture and ancient traditions.

"Our effort to fly victims to Havana for a forgiveness program was important in turning the tide for a yes to the referendum in Colombia," tweeted Sri Sri, referring to the forgiveness meeting that Art of Living facilitated between FARC leaders and the families of 12 deputies who were kidnapped, held captive and finally killed by the FARC (only one survived).

The Art of Living in Colombia is developing peace-building programs that will be adopted in the post-conflict period.

OCTOBER

Gurudev Drives Debate in the Norwegian Parliament Towards Peace Building October

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar addressed the Norwegian Parliament and met with the President of the Parliament, Olemic Thommessen.



The event witnessed a heated debate when a member brought up some areas of conflict in India. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Member of Parliament Mrs. Sylvi Graham managed to drive the debate towards resolution that there should be a united fight against terrorism and poverty and the attention of the society should be towards similarities rather than the differences to bring peace and harmony in diversity.)

Earlier Gurudev addressed the civil society and later was joined for a luncheon by the State Secretary of the Prime Minister. The next day Gurudev was received by the Norwegian Olympic Committee and its head Mr. Inge Anderson as well as the record Winning Olympic medalist Kjetil Andre Aamodt.

It was decided that The Art of Living and the Olympic Sports Committee Norway will work together to conduct more confidence building programs for athletes.

NOVEMBER

Inaugurates Skills Training Center To Electrify India With Solar Power Nov. 15



The Art of Living's Sri Sri Kaushal Vikas Kendra for Renewable Energy, a skills training center was launched by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in association with technology partner, Schneider Electric on the premises of The Art of Living International Center in Bengaluru on November 15.

“There is an economic revolution (artha kranti) underway in the country today,” said Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, “Along with this, there should be a solar energy revolution too. With your efforts, as more villages get solar power, there will be light in every household even in the nights.”

“I am very sure given the organizational capability of The Art of Living, they will do a fabulous job of changing the lives of youth at the bottom of the pyramid,” said Jayant Krishna, Executive Director

and Chief Operating Officer, National Skills Development Council.

Other dignitaries at the ceremony included Vinod Bihari, CEO, Power Sector Skill Council and S Nagarajan, VP, National sales, Schneider Electric.

About 50 students underwent a training for three months in installation and repair of solar appliances. This center will provide training to rural youth on solar energy, which is getting traction from renewable energy market.

Schneider Electric and The Art of Living signed an MOU to open 20 centers for electrical training and one state-of-the-art solar energy research and technology and training center at Sri Sri University.

3rd Convocation at Sri Sri University, India, Nov. 18,

The third Convocation was held at Sri Sri University with the life time President of Sri Sri University, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, presiding over the function. His Excellency Governor of Odisha, Dr S.C. Jamir was the chief guest at the event.

Around 150 students, from 28 states of India, of graduating batches of MBA, MA in Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences, MA in Good Governance and Public Policy and Post doctorate received their degrees from the Guests of Honor along with some dignitaries.

Opening the convocation, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar said “Education is just not gathering information, it is shining one’s personality which is required in today’s world. The University is a blend of best of East and West.”

Dr. S.C.Jamir, Chief Guest, His Excellency Governor of Odisha, emphasized: “It is important to nurture a spirit of innovation in young minds and encourage them to research and to tackle local, national and global challenges.”

Sri Sri Launches South Asian Forum for Peace in Kashmir

Nov. 23



The Art of Living brought together multiple stakeholders including ex-militants, families of victims of militancy, youth leaders, women, entrepreneurs, parents bodies, select Kashmiri NGOs, Sufi leaders, academicians, media, persons in art and culture, representatives of the Sikh community and dissenters including those who resorted to stone pelting to deliberate and have a dialogue on the situation in Kashmir as part of the ‘Kashmir Back to Paradise’ Conference held in Jammu on November 23, 2016. It is for the first time in recent months that such a diverse and large representation of stakeholders from Jammu and Kashmir came together for a dialogue on peaceful and prosperous Kashmir. This is an effort on the part of The Art of Living to rally diverse stakeholders in an effort to restore peace in the valley. The conference provided a platform for a more broad-based approach where a cross-section of Kashmiri leadership voiced their opinion and support for the need for peace in the valley.

“I have not come here with a ready-made solution,” said Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. “We will all have to come together, sit together and bring out a solution. Solutions cannot be found in the streets, not with stones and guns.”

“Kashmir has been a bastion of the intellectuals, artists, spiritual leaders, Sufis, literary greats, Rishis and Munis. But unfortunately today, we are helplessly



watching schools and buses being burnt and shops being gutted. There are many sane voices which are unheard. The common man is caught between harthaal and curfews. So there is a dire need for a platform where common people can express their opinions and ideas. So I thought we should come together and form a platform, South Asian Forum for Peace,” said Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

As the way forward, the South Asian Forum for Peace was launched. The Forum would span eight South Asian countries to bring them together, to co-operate and work in areas such as entrepreneurship, skill development, cultural exchange, educational partnerships and women empowerment initiatives among others.

Many delegations from Kashmir who met Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in the recent months, like Dr. Ghulam Rasool Hami, head of the J&K-based Karwan-I-Islami; Muzaffar Wani, father of slain militant Burhan Wani, had requested Gurudev to intervene in Kashmir.

DECEMBER

Latin America Looks To Sri Sri For Peace December

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar toured as many as 13 cities across eight nations in Latin America as part of his ongoing efforts to usher peace in world's

most violent regions in South and Central America. Some of the world's top publications, including the Paris-based Le Monde, described the effort as "breathtakingly fresh in a region where no one wanted to look forward".

From being invited to 'Change the Rose of Peace' at the Cultural Palace of Guatemala City by the Ministry of Culture to being given the rarest honour of opening the Miraflores Locks (Panama Canal Gates) in Panama, Gurudev was acknowledged as a leader who can influence mind sets for positive social transformation.

Gurudev and the Pope are the only spiritual leaders to have been given the honor of opening the gates of the Panama Canal. He was also honored as "Distinguished Guest" by Governor of Province of Panama and conferred the highest civilian award in Recife, Brazil.

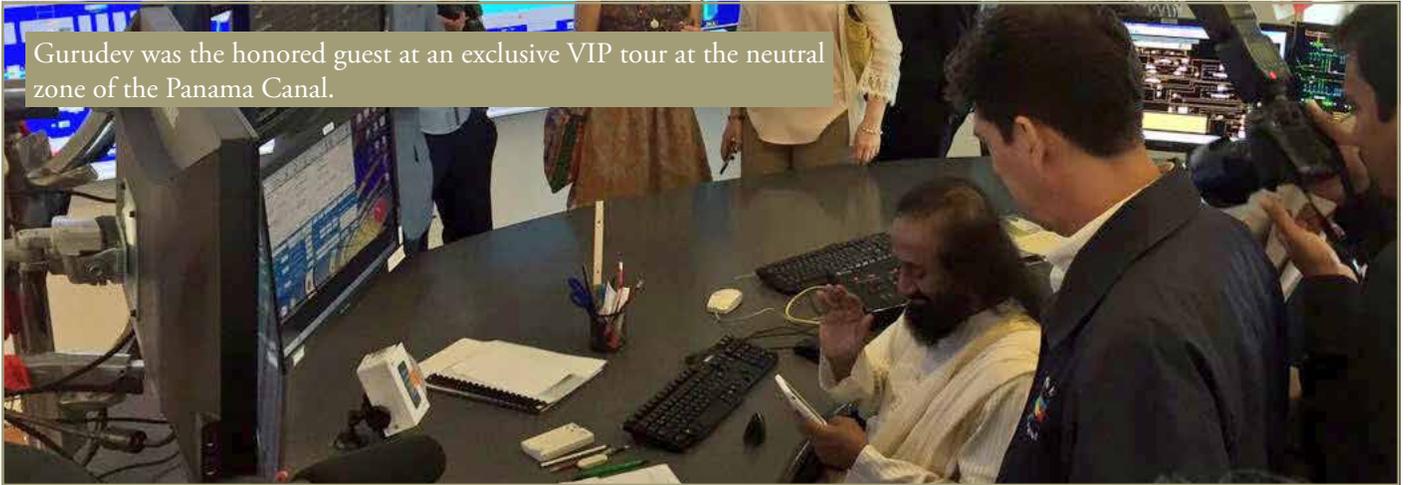
At Guerrero, one of Mexico's most violent states, he was welcomed with a massive public reception by Governor Hector Astudillo. The Governor also conferred the Ambassador of Peace recognition on him, an honour given to three people so far.

In Mexico, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar sought holistic ways for tackling the widespread violence in the country, arising from drug wars and gang fights. He also visited two of Mexico's largest prisons filled with hardened criminals and drug lords - Santa Marta Acatitla and Reclusorio Varonil Norte and a drug rehab Center where incidences of violence have reduced drastically after the introduction of Art of Living's prisoner rehabilitation program.

At Guerrero, the governor appealed for his support to end the war of the cartels in this strategic region of drug production and trafficking with an average of six killings per day.

During his 20-day peace mission to 8 nations in the South American continent, Sri Sri Ravi

Gurudev was the honored guest at an exclusive VIP tour at the neutral zone of the Panama Canal.



With Hon. Rui Costa, Governor of Bahaia, Brazil



Shankar travelled to Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Costa Rica and Brazil. He was warmly welcomed as an ambassador of peace by heads of governments, legislators, decision makers, businessmen, academicians and the masses, demonstrating a deep resonance with holistic approach to peace building.

Address at Reconciliation Colombia event, Cali



His public programs in San Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama and Brazil were packed to capacity. From November 29 to December 19 Sri Sri also launched volunteer campaigns across many cities and urged people to put in one hour a day in the service of society. The campaigns will take up projects in the areas of improving protection of women, fighting corruption and reducing crime among others.

Joshua Mitroti, Director of Colombian Agency for Reconciliation & Henry Acosta, Peace Process Mediator in Cali



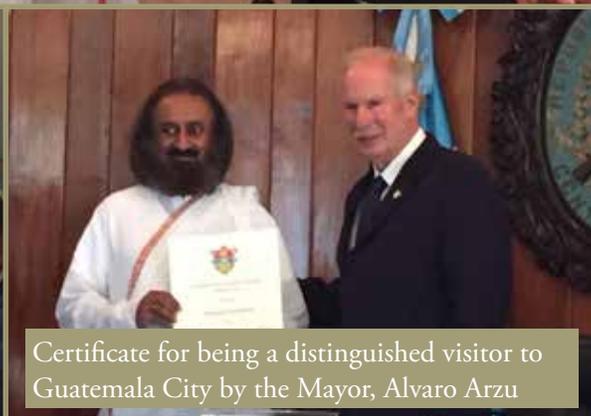
The Art of Living has been working in the South American continent for 18 years now. During the visit Sri Sri sealed agreements for extending Art of Living programs for prison officials, public schools, rehabilitating slum children and de-addiction programs.



'Change the Rose of Peace' event in Guatemala City by the Ministry of Culture - an honor accorded previously only to peacemakers like the Pope and Mother Teresa



Interfaith meet in Mexico City



Certificate for being a distinguished visitor to Guatemala City by the Mayor, Alvaro Arzu



President of Guatemalan National Reserve Bank Luis Velasquez presenting the highest award for human values & development.



Gurudev addresses inmates of the second largest & most violent prison in Mexico City, Reclusorio Varonil Norte



Gurudev received the Ambassador of Peace Award, Acapulco, Mexico



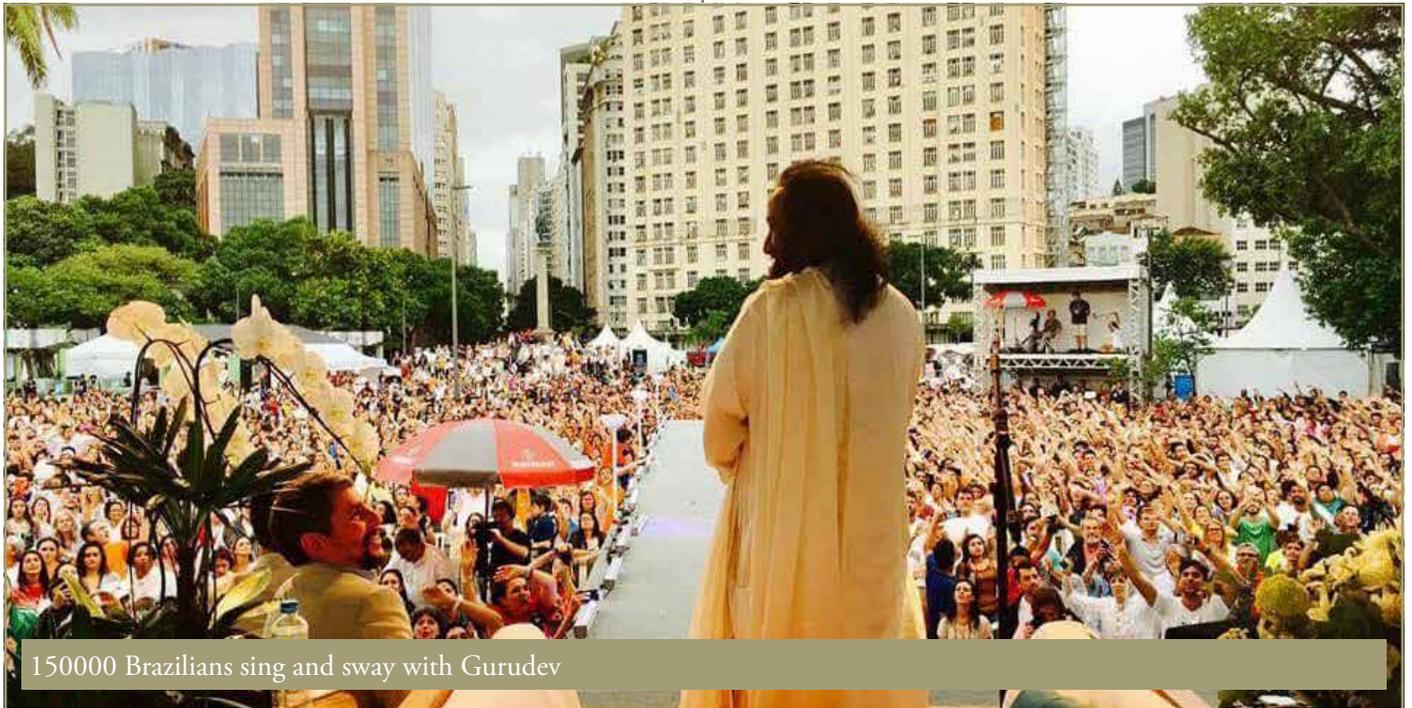
Signing of agreement for the peace with President of Costa Rica, Luis Guillermo Solís



Business Workshop - Leadership for a better world



Workshop with First Lady of CR & presidential gabinet



150000 Brazilians sing and sway with Gurudev

Here are the other highlights of the tour:

- In war-scarred Colombia Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was the keynote speaker at Reconciliation Colombia along with speakers like Nobel Peace Prize Winner and Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos. The spiritual leader also led a mass meditation program outside the Colombian parliament at Bolivar Square, where the famous Latin American band Aterciapelodas joined in Sanskrit chanting and meditations.
- In Costa Rica, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar signed an MOU with President Luis Guillermo Solis to work for peace and non-violence in the country.
- In Panama he had a discussion with the vice president Isabel Alvarado de Saint-Malo on initiatives to foster peace and combat violence.
- In Brazil Sri Sri Ravi Shankar had discussions with key leaders including Brazilian President Michel Temer, Minister of Education Mendonca Filo and the Health Minister and President of Human Rights Commission Padre Joao. Sri Sri also signed an important partnership with the government of Bahia in Brazil to bring Art of Living program to all the 32000 personnel of the police force in the state.
- San Salvador honoured him for his contribution to peace and humanitarian work.
- The three-week tour of Latin America concluded on an enthusiastic note at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil where over 15000 people turned up for an evening of music and meditation with Sri Sri.

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Have touched the lives of **370 million** people

Run humanitarian projects in **every sphere of life**

Unite **across religion, race, creed**

Run **3000 centers** across the world

Over **100 million man hours** in developing the full human potential

Over **150,000 Stress Relief Workshops** benefiting more than **5.6 million** people

One of the largest volunteer-based networks in the world

Reached **40,212 villages** in India

Developed **50 model villages** in India

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