

Sri Sri urges dialogue to end conflicts

Says mediators needed to bring peace to the world

World renowned spiritual and humanitarian leader and founder of the Art of Living His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar stressed upon the power of dialogue in resolving conflicts in the world on September 12.



Addressing the government-sponsored Point of Peace Summit, a meeting between former Nobel Peace Prize laureates and conflict solution experts, in Stavanger, Norway Sri Sri emphasised how effective mediation can bring warring parties to dialogue. “There is a great need for dialogue and for creating mediators. The role of a mediator is vital and he needs to play the role of a catalyst without imposing himself,” he said.

Sri Sri addresses the Point of Peace Summit

Addressing the highly-qualified audience of world renowned leaders of peace, Sri Sri elucidated how he and the Art of Living work to reform violent tendencies and promote dialogues all over the world. Citing stress as the root cause of conflicts in the world, he emphasised the need for mechanisms for getting rid of stress. “Stress creates barriers in communication. For any dialogue to happen a mediator is needed, and it is the skill of the mediator that makes successful dialogues,” he said.

“There is always misinformation, rumours campaigns involved in a conflict. A mediator needs to listen and create hope in people. A proper understanding of the situation on the part of the mediator is crucial for preventing the situation getting escalated,” he added.

“Most conflicts are based on identity crisis. We have forgotten that first and foremost, we are all human beings; then other identifications such as religion, nationality and gender follow. If people get stuck with their limited identity, they are ready to die for it. We need to move beyond our narrow identities to overcome fear, mistrust and conflict in the post 9/11 scenario,” he said. “To curb terrorism in the long-run, children must be provided a multicultural and multi-faith education,” added.



Sri Sri and Nobel laureate and former president of South Korea Kim Dae Jung greet each other

The three-day Summit is held as part of Stavanger's nomination as the 'European Capital of Culture in 2008'. A large number of Nobel Peace Prize laureates gathered to exchange ideas and Sri Sri was invited to deliver an address on the topic 'The Power of Dialogue -9/11 and Then What?'. Also joining him on the panel were former President of South Korea Kim Dae-Jung, former Prime Minister of Norway Kjell Magne Bondevik and several other intellectuals.

Sri Sri's systematic approach to dialogue and peace building has helped bring together warring parties in many conflict zones. His recent interventions in Indian states of Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan proved that even the most volatile conflicts can be resolved through dialogue.

In August 2008, Sri Sri played a major role in finding an amicable solution to the Amarnath land imbroglio that triggered large-scale violence and protests throughout Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, In June, 2008, Sri Sri worked to diffuse the violence and tension that had engulfed the Indian state of Rajasthan following an agitation by the Gujjar community demanding recognition as a backward community (scheduled tribe status) and reservation benefits. Thanks to Sri Sri's mediation, the agitators agreed to hold negotiations with the government. Within a few days of starting negotiations, an amicable solution was reached between the agitators and government, bringing to an end the 19-day imbroglio.