



## Bharat New Car Assessment Programme

**For Prelims:** [Bharat New Car Assessment Programme](#), **Global NCAP**, [Ministry of Road Transport & Highways](#)

**For Mains:** Positive Outcomes and Challenges Related to Bharat NCAP.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways**, Government of India, has introduced the [Bharat New Car Assessment Programme \(Bharat NCAP\)](#).

- This indigenous star-rating system aims to **evaluate the safety of vehicles in the event of a collision**, empowering consumers to make informed decisions while purchasing cars.
- This comprehensive program is set to come into effect from **October 1, 2023**, and will play a pivotal role in curbing the alarming number of road fatalities in India.

### What is Bharat NCAP?

- **About:** Under the Bharat NCAP initiative, vehicles, particularly **passenger cars**, will be **subjected to rigorous crash testing procedures**, and based on their performance as per protocols laid down in the soon-to-be-published Automotive Industry Standard 197, they will be assigned a safety rating ranging from one to five stars.
  - The programme is applicable to passenger vehicles with **not more than eight seats** in addition to the driver's seat with gross vehicle weight not exceeding **3,500 kgs**.
  - The test procedure involves **Frontal Offset Test, Side Impact Test and Pole-Side Impact Test**.
    - This rating will provide consumers with a clear indication of a vehicle's safety standards in the event of a collision.
  - Notably, **Bharat NCAP is voluntary**, encouraging manufacturers to nominate their vehicles for testing, thereby driving the production of safer cars in the Indian market.
- **Testing Parameters:** Bharat NCAP evaluates vehicles based on three crucial parameters:
  - **Adult Occupant Protection:** This parameter assesses the level of protection a vehicle offers to adult passengers in the event of a crash.
  - **Child Occupant Protection:** The safety of child occupants is equally vital. This parameter gauges a vehicle's effectiveness in safeguarding young passengers during collisions.
  - **Safety Assist Technologies:** Modern vehicles are equipped with a range of safety assist technologies. This parameter examines the presence and effectiveness of these technologies in preventing accidents or minimizing their impact.
- **Mandatory and Recommended Testing:** While the Bharat NCAP is voluntary, certain scenarios can trigger mandatory testing:
  - **Base Model Testing:** The base model of a popular variant, with a minimum sale of 30,000 units, may be subjected to testing.

- **Ministry Recommendations:** If recommended by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** based on market feedback or public safety concerns, certain models might undergo testing.
- **Evolution and Alignment with Global Standards:** The Bharat NCAP draws inspiration from the **Global NCAP**, a project initiated by the **U.K.-based NGO Towards Zero Foundation**.
  - The Global NCAP acts as a collaborative platform for new car assessment programs worldwide including countries such as the U.S. which has the world's oldest crash testing regime since 1978. .
  - Over the years, India's testing protocols have evolved, with more than **50 crash test results published for the Indian market**.
    - Notably, Tata achieved India's first 5-star car rating in 2018.
- **Possible Outcomes:**
  - **Reduced Fatalities:** With India witnessing around **1.5 lakh road fatalities** annually, Bharat NCAP aims to reduce casualties by encouraging the **production of safer vehicles**.
  - **Healthcare and Insurance Relief:** Improved vehicle safety would lead to a reduction in the burden on [healthcare](#) and [insurance](#) sectors, resulting in positive societal and economic impacts.
  - **Manufacturer Reputation:** Manufacturers can enhance their brand reputation through consumer-centric practices, **fostering higher consumer loyalty**.
- **Challenges:**
  - **Diverse Road Conditions:** India's road infrastructure varies greatly, from **congested urban roads to poorly maintained rural highways**.
    - Different road conditions can impact the way vehicles behave during crashes, making it **challenging to design a one-size-fits-all safety assessment framework**.
  - **Affordability and Market Dynamics:** A substantial portion of the Indian population seeks **budget-friendly vehicles**, which might pose a challenge for manufacturers in implementing advanced safety features.
    - Striking a **balance between affordability and safety could be a complex task**, requiring innovative engineering solutions.
  - **Variety of Vehicles:** India's automotive market is diverse, featuring a wide range of vehicle types and sizes.
    - Designing crash tests that effectively evaluate safety across this diversity, from **compact cars to SUVs**, requires thorough consideration of different vehicle dynamics.
  - **Consumer and their Preferences:** While the Bharat NCAP aims to empower consumers, the **challenge lies in creating awareness about safety ratings and convincing buyers to prioritize safety over other features**.
    - Consumer preferences might still **lean towards design, features, and price**, limiting the immediate impact of safety ratings.

## Way Forward

- **Collaborative Safety R&D Hubs:** There is a need to **establish safety research and development hubs** in collaboration with academic institutions and manufacturers.
  - These hubs can focus on addressing specific safety challenges unique to India, fostering innovation through joint research.
- **Road Safety Awareness through Art:** There is a need to collaborate with **local artists to create safety-themed public art installations near accident-prone areas** that can raise awareness about the importance of safe driving.
- **"Safety Score" Integration:** Insurance companies can **assign a safety score to each vehicle model based on its NCAP rating**.
  - This safety score can be **displayed prominently on advertisements and dealerships**, making safety a focal point of consumer decisions.

