India Status Report on Road Safety 2024

Source: TH

Why in News?

According to **the India Status Report on Road Safety 2024** of **IIT Delhi** highlights India's **slow progress** toward meeting international goals of **reducing road accident fatalities**.

What are the Key Findings of the Report?

- **Methodology of the Report:**
  - The report evaluates road safety in India, utilizing data from **First Information Reports (FIRs)** across six states (Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh), alongside audits of state compliance with Supreme Court mandates on road safety governance.
- **Findings of the Report:**
  - In 2021, road traffic injuries were the 13th leading cause of mortality in India and the 12th leading cause of health loss, as measured by **Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).**
    - In the states road traffic injuries ranked among the top 10 contributors to health loss.
- **Performance of States in Road Safety:**
  - **Road safety in India exhibits significant regional variation**, with per capita road traffic death rates differing more than threefold across states.
    - Tamil Nadu (21.9), Telangana (19.2), and Chhattisgarh (17.6) recorded the highest death rates per 1,00,000 people.
    - West Bengal and Bihar had the **lowest rates at 5.9 per 1,00,000 in 2021.**
    - Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, account for **nearly 50% of all road traffic fatalities.**
  - The report identifies **pedestrians, cyclists, and motorised two-wheeler riders** as the **most vulnerable** road users, while trucks are responsible for the highest proportion of impacting vehicles.
  - Despite the life-saving potential of helmet usage, more than **50% of motorised two-wheeler riders wear helmets in only seven states.**
  - **Only eight states have audited more than half of their National Highway** networks,

and even fewer states have extended such audits to State Highways.

- Basic road safety measures such as **traffic calming, road markings, and signage remain insufficient in most states,** while helmet usage in rural areas is particularly low, and trauma care facilities are inadequate.
- The report underscores the need for tailored, **state-specific strategies to address the diverse road safety challenges** across India.

- **India Performing Globally:**

  - Most Indian states are unlikely to meet the **[United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety](#)** objective, which aims to halve traffic-related deaths by 2030.
  - The report presents a **comparison between India and developed countries** such as Sweden and other Scandinavian nations, which have demonstrated exemplary road safety governance.
    - In 1990, the likelihood of an Indian dying in a road accident was 40% higher than in these nations; by **2021, this disparity had escalated to 600%, reflecting a significant surge in road fatalities in India.**

Note

- **Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030: The** [UN General Assembly](#) **adopted resolution "Improving global road safety " with the ambitious target of preventing at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.**
- The Global Plan aligns with the **[Stockholm Declaration](#)**, by emphasising the importance of a holistic approach to road safety.

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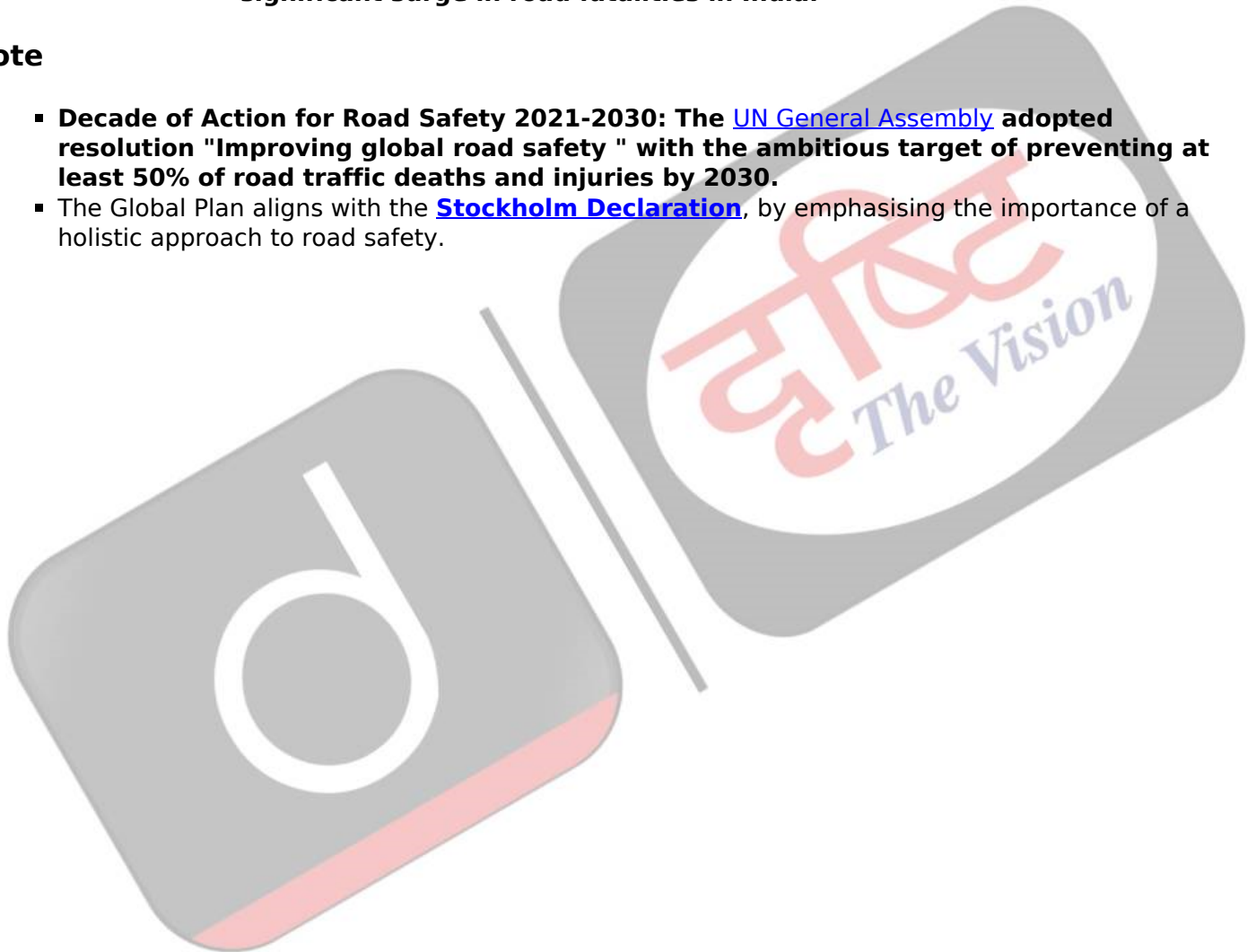
Safety first

In 2021, road traffic injuries were the 13th leading cause of death in India and the 12th leading cause of health loss.

Percentage of road traffic deaths by victims mode of transport in six States

	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Pedestrian	19	23	44	29	24	28
Bicycle	4	13	3	3	1	3
Motorised two-wheeler	58	51	40	47	58	48
Motorised three-wheeler	1	7	4	3	1	3
Car	4	4	5	8	6	7
Bus	1	1	0	1	1	4
Truck	5	1	2	5	5	4
Farm tractor	6	0	0	2	2	0
Others	0	1	1	1	2	1
Unknown	0	1	1	0	0	1
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Percentage of road traffic deaths by type of impacting vehicle in six States

	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Bicycle	0	0	1	0	1	0
Motorised two-wheeler	13	11	6	10	14	10
Motorised three-wheeler	0	7	2	1	0	1
Car	7	36	14	25	14	21
Bus	3	5	6	4	4	7
Truck	24	12	18	32	27	28
Farm tractor	5	1	1	7	4	6
Others	11	12	5	1	5	2
None	16	9	3	2	16	5
Unknown	18	9	45	17	15	21
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: India Status Report on Road Safety 2024

National Strategy for Prevention of Unintentional Injury of the Ministry of Health

- **Road traffic crashes (RTCs)** are the largest cause of deaths due to unintentional injuries in India, contributing to **43.7% of fatalities.**
  - **Over-speeding** accounts for **75.2%** of these deaths, followed by driving on the **wrong side (5.8%)** and driving under the influence of **alcohol or drugs (2.5%)**.
  - **Road traffic injuries (RTIs):**
    - **86%** of RTI fatalities are **males, 14% are females**.
    - **67.8%** of RTI deaths occur in **rural areas, 32.2% in urban areas**.
- **National highways** (only 2.1% of total road length) are responsible for the **most road fatalities**, accounting for 45 deaths per 100 km in 2022.

Supreme Court Interventions on Road Safety

- **The Supreme Court of India** had set up the three-member **Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan panel on road safety in April 2014** which recommended the ban on the **sale of alcohol on highways to restrain drunk driving.**
  - It also directed states to **implement laws on wearing helmets.**
  - The committee stressed the importance of **creating awareness among people on road safety rules.**
- The SC in 2017, issued a number of directives with regard to road safety that, inter alia, included few measures.
  - The constitution of a **State Road Safety Council**
  - The setting up of **road safety fund**
  - Notification of a **road safety action plan**
  - The constitution of a **district road safety committee**
  - The establishment of **trauma care centres**
  - Inclusion of **road safety education** in the academic curriculum of schools

What are the Government Initiatives Related to Road Safety?

- Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019
- The Carriage by Road Act, 2007
- The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000
- National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998
- Third High Level Global Conference on Road Safety for Achieving Global Goals 2030

Way Forward

- **Prioritising Road Safety Interventions:** This requires a **coordinated approach across multiple sectors such as transportation,** health, and law enforcement to develop holistic strategies that can significantly reduce fatalities and injuries.
  - Small steps can also be taken like mandatory use of helmet, abiding traffic laws, and maintaining vehicles, etc.
- **Establishment of a National Database for Fatal Crashes:** National Database will serve as a **comprehensive repository of data,** enabling policymakers, researchers, and enforcement agencies to **analyze real-time trends and identify high-risk areas.**
- **Public Access and Transparency:** Providing public access to the national crash database will **enhance transparency and foster greater accountability** among stakeholders.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** By tracking accident rates and fatalities over time, governments can gauge the **impact of road safety campaigns, legislation, and infrastructure improvements.**
- **Leveraging Technology for Road Safety:** The adoption of emerging technologies, such as **AI-driven traffic monitoring, smart signage, and data analytics tools**, can be integrated with the national database to further enhance road safety.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Critically analyze the major challenges in ensuring road safety in India and suggest comprehensive measures.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains:

Q. NationalUrban Transport Policy emphasises on 'moving people' instead of 'moving vehicles'. Discuss critically the success of the various strategies of the Government in this regard. **(2014)**

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