

6.Road Safety Project in Four States- Governance

UN launches road safety financing project in four States. India's road safety crisis, costing 3% of GDP and over 1.5 lakh lives yearly, is being addressed through a new UN-backed financing project in four key states. By transitioning toward a Systems Approach and utilizing tools like iRAD and Blackspot Rectification, the government aims to fulfil its Brasilia Declaration commitment to halve road fatalities by 2030.

1. The Global and National Crisis

Road safety is a critical public health and economic challenge, with India currently at the epicentre of the crisis.

Global Context- Under the "Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030," the world pledged to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2030, but progress remains off-track.

India's Ranking- India ranks first globally in road accident fatalities.

- 1. Annual Toll- Approximately 153,972 lives lost annually.
- 2. Death Rate- 15.4 per 100,000 people (WHO).

Urban vs. Rural Challenges-

- 1. Urban (Delhi/Mumbai)- High vehicle density, poor management, and narrow roads shared by diverse users (pedestrians to heavy trucks).
- 2. Rural- Fatalities are high due to long emergency response times and lack of specialized trauma care.

2. Socio-Economic Impact

Impact Category	Estimated Loss/Metric
National Economy	Exceeds 3% of India's GDP annually.
Long-term Disability	The World Bank estimates life-long injuries amount to 7% of global GDP in productivity loss.
Social Cost	Sudden loss of breadwinners pushes families into poverty and creates a cycle of vulnerability.

3. Key Government Initiatives

India has moved from basic awareness to legislative and technological interventions.

A. Legislative & Policy Framework

National Road Safety Policy (2010)- Focuses on the "4 Es"- Engineering, Enforcement, Education, and Emergency care.

Motor Vehicles Amendment Act (2019)- Introduced significantly higher penalties for speeding, drunk driving, and non-use of helmets/seatbelts.

Brasilia Declaration (2015)- India is a signatory, committing to halving global road deaths by 2030.

B. Technological & Data Systems

e-DAR / iRAD- Centralized systems for reporting and analysing accident data to identify trends and causes.

Inspection & Certification Centres- Standardizing vehicle fitness to remove old, unfit vehicles from the road (28 States/UTs covered by 2024).

C. Engineering & Design

Blackspot Rectification- Priority engineering measures to improve accident-prone spots on National Highways.

Mandatory Audits- Road safety audits are now compulsory during the design, construction, and operation phases of all highway projects.

D. Post-Crash Care & Compensation

Good Samaritan Scheme- Awards ₹25,000 to citizens who help victims reach a hospital within the "golden hour."

Compensation Tiers-

1. Death- ₹5 lakh (Hit-and-run- ₹2 lakh).
2. Grievous Hurt- ₹2.5 lakh (Hit-and-run- ₹50,000).

4. Scientific & Institutional Collaboration

IIT Madras- Established a Centre of Excellence for Road Safety to conduct advanced research and safety product development.

CRRI (Central Road Research Institute)- Collaborating with the government to refine safety policies based on local road conditions and behavioural data.

5. The Way Ahead- A Systems Approach

With a road network of 6.6 million kilometres (2nd largest globally), India requires a Systems Approach—treating road safety as a shared responsibility between infrastructure designers and users.

Infrastructure & Enforcement- Consistent application of traffic laws and building safer, "forgiving" roads that minimize human error.

Systemic Behavioural Change- Ensuring 100% helmet and seatbelt compliance through both technology (cameras) and awareness.

Corporate Role- Leveraging CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) funds to strengthen research and community-level safety awareness.

Emergency Infrastructure- Scaling up trauma care centres in rural corridors to ensure "Golden Hour" medical intervention.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/un-launches-road-safety-financing-project-in-four-states/article70671359.ece>

