

Sansad TV Perspective: Road to Safety

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme 'Perspective' on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: Road to Safety.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/NRM7QOOHqIg>

Anchor: Teena Jha

Participants:

1. Indresh Kumar Pandey, DG, Road Development & Special Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, GOI
2. Dr. K Ravinder, Senior Principal Scientist & HoD (TPE Div.), Central Road Research Institute
3. Karuna Raina, Director, Public Policy & Research, Save Life Foundation

Context:

In the dynamic world of development and progress, the connectivity through roads entails historic episodes of trade, kingdoms, travel literature and people to people contact. The present time considers well-connected roads essential for economic growth to flourish. The roads of our country expound the richness of the past, associating with the present aspirations and entrusted with the assurance of safety that opens up future avenues of sustainability. The context of road safety has taken up the shape of a major concern globally. In this regard, the experts come together to ascertain ways to reduce road accidents that are emerging threats and create awareness about road safety.

Overview of the discussion:

- The discussion on road safety highlighted important facts that made the issue of road safety a noteworthy one. It is estimated that globally 3500 people die on roads that account for preventable deaths and injuries involving children and young people worldwide.
- Acknowledging the importance of the issue, the [UNGA](#) declared the decade of action for road safety spanning 2021-2030. This sets an ambitious target of reducing 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.
- The Global Action Plan for Road Safety launched by the United Nations requested every country to actively participate to boost the objective of making roads safer for commuters.

- The discussion laid an emphasis on how far the Global Action Plan benefits India to bring down the road accidents. India ranked 3rd in terms of accidents across 199 countries and accounts for 11% of global accident deaths.
- Therefore there is a necessity to enforce a proper road infrastructure plan to improve the condition of roads in India.
- Experts recommended road safety to be an integral part of road design and implementation of the provisions of the [Motor Vehicles \(Amendment\) Act of 2019](#). States like Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu with high road fatalities haven't implemented the rules under the Act.
- Apart from the road infrastructure, it was pointed out that awareness among people regarding traffic rules, safe driving with all the protective equipment play a vital role in ensuring road safety.

Government Initiatives:

1. The 4 'E' Approach:

- a. The Government of India put forth Engineering, Economy, Enforcement and Education as the fundamental areas to focus on in order to ensure road safety. The black spot in every state, district and city shall be identified and removed. The World Bank and [Asian Development Bank](#) have funded to assist the National Highways Authority to remove the black spots and improve the road conditions.

2. The Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- a. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has made major changes to the MVA, 1989.
- b. According to the new rules, the documents relating to vehicles can be saved in the soft copy format in the Digi-locker without the hassle of carrying them.
- c. No physical verification will be done. If necessary it would be done through a portal. The behaviour of the driver will be observed and updated in the portal.
- d. The violators of traffic rules will be penalised under Motor Vehicle Act with the issuance of e-challan in the digital portal.
- e. All these would lead to the ease of traffic on the road and prevent harassment of drivers by the police.

3. Sadak Suraksha - Jeevan Raksha:

- a. The Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways has started a campaign to establish road safety involving the participation of citizens by promoting several activities like the Road Safety Hackathon, Article writing competition on Road Safety, movie-making on road safety. This will bring mass awareness about road safety and educate the citizens.

4. iRAD Mobile and Web Application:

- a. This is an Integrated Road Accident Database Project initiated by the MoRTH, GOI and funded by World Bank.

- b. The database would enable the analysis of road accidents and provide the output through data analytics techniques.
- c. This aims to assure a safe road for all.

Walking towards a future with Road safety

- The discussion on Road Safety concluded with enormous emphasis on the requirement of a multi-pronged strategy along with the engagement of various stakeholders.
 - The policies must ensure to replicate and scale up the success models developed by the NGOs working on road safety and other stakeholders with a scientific approach.
 - For instance, the road crash deaths in the Mumbai-Pune Expressway have been reduced to 50% by the intervention of the Save Life Foundation. This foundation also introduced the concept of **tactical urbanism** that intends to revamp the intersections of the roads and bring down the fatalities and protect the safe mobility of the pedestrians.
 - The purview of these projects can be expanded by government intervention and this would facilitate meeting the targets of the Global Action Plan on Road Safety to bring down unusual events and fatalities on roads to 50%.
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