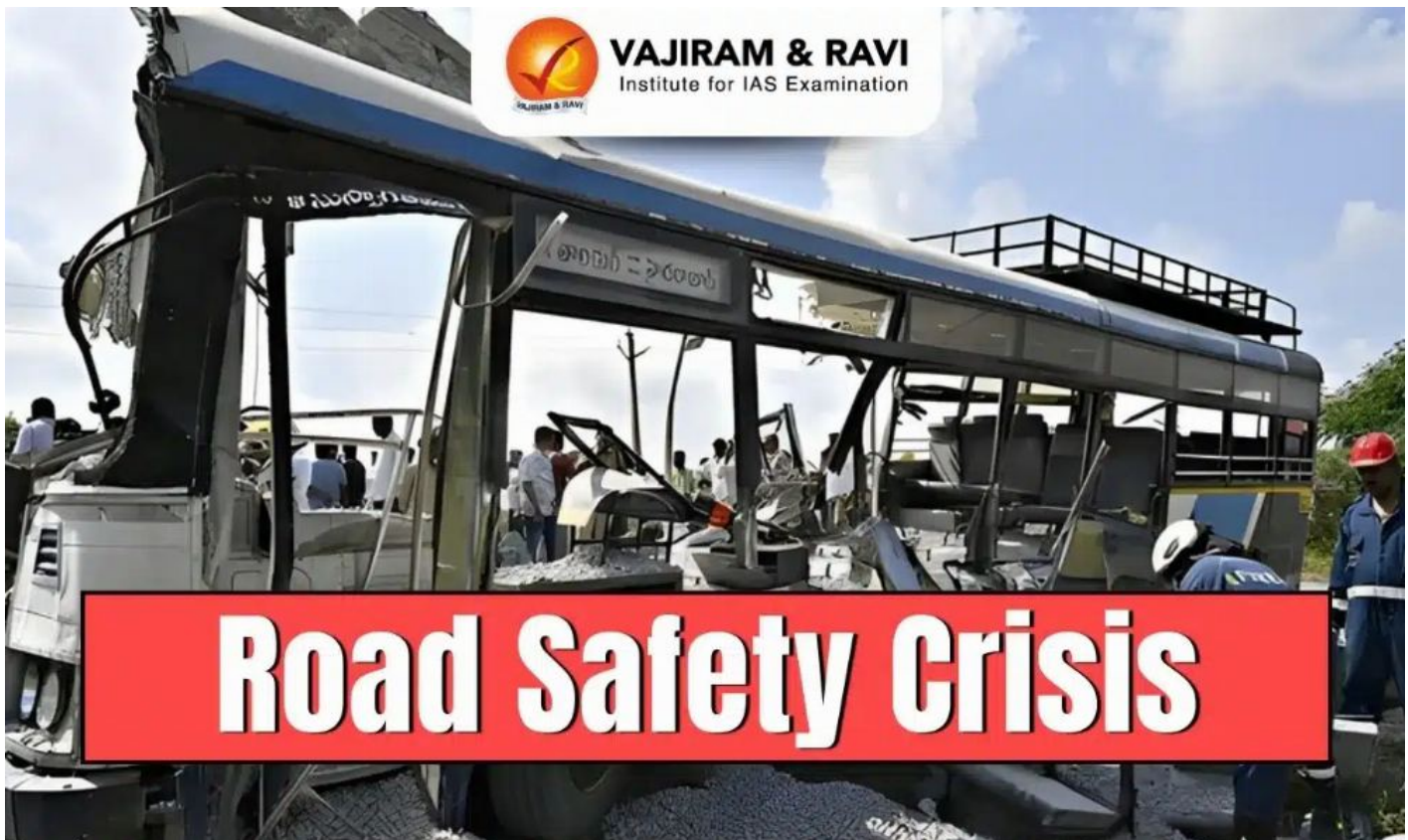


India's Road Safety Crisis - Engineering Gaps and Rising Fatalities

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Road Safety Crisis Latest News

- A recent national report has identified India's deadliest districts for road accidents, revealing that most fatalities are linked to infrastructure and systemic failures rather than traffic violations.

India's Road Safety Scenario

- India records the **highest number of road accident deaths globally**, far exceeding other major countries.
- Despite having the world's second-largest road network, road safety outcomes remain poor.
- According to recent estimates, nearly **3.5 lakh people died in road accidents during 2023-24**, highlighting the scale of the crisis.
- Road safety in India has traditionally focused on driver behaviour, such as speeding or drunk driving.

- However, emerging evidence shows that this approach alone is insufficient, as deeper structural issues dominate accident causation.

Key Structural Factors Behind Road Fatalities

- The report underlines that 59% of road accident fatalities occurred without any traffic violation, clearly pointing to **road engineering deficiencies** as a primary cause of deaths. These include:
 - Poor road design and alignment
 - Absence or damage of crash barriers
 - Inadequate signage and road markings
 - Insufficient street lighting
 - Unsafe junctions and pedestrian crossings
- Such defects convert routine travel into a high-risk activity, especially on rural roads and highways.

Geographic Concentration of Road Accidents

- Road fatalities in India are **highly concentrated** rather than evenly spread.
- The report identifies **100 districts** accounting for more than **25% of total road deaths** over two years. Among them:
 - **Nashik Rural** and **Pune Rural** recorded the highest number of severe accidents.
 - Other high-fatality districts include Patna, Ahmednagar, Purba Midnapur, and Belagavi.
 - States such as Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Rajasthan dominate the list.
- This concentration indicates that **targeted interventions** in specific districts can yield substantial reductions in fatalities.

Nature and Timing of Fatal Accidents

- The report highlights clear accident patterns:
 - 53% of deaths occurred between 6 PM and midnight, reflecting poor visibility and fatigue-related risks.
 - **Rear-end, head-on, and pedestrian crashes accounted for 72% of fatalities.**
 - Speeding contributed to only **19% of deaths**, while rash driving and dangerous overtaking together accounted for less than 10%.
- This challenges the perception that driver misconduct alone is responsible and shifts attention to road design and traffic management failures.

Emergency Response and Medical Gaps

- Post-accident response remains weak:
 - Only about one-fifth of victims used the government 108 ambulance services.
 - A majority were transported using private vehicles or private ambulances, delaying critical care.
 - Hospital readiness and trauma care infrastructure vary widely across districts.
- Delayed medical response significantly increases mortality, making emergency preparedness a crucial pillar of road safety.

News Summary: Findings and Recommendations of the Report

- The joint report by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and SaveLIFE Foundation provides a clear roadmap for action:
 - Focus on known crash-prone locations rather than spreading resources thinly.
 - Conduct Road Safety Surveys on critical corridors by NHAI and state PWDs.
 - Implement site-specific engineering corrections based on Indian Road Congress and MoRTH guidelines.
 - Strengthen policing capacity at high-fatality police station jurisdictions.
 - Improve emergency response by expanding effective coverage of 108 ambulance services.
 - Use existing schemes more efficiently instead of launching new ones.
- The report stresses that reducing road deaths requires **better coordination, clearer accountability, and sustained leadership**, not additional laws or schemes.

Source: **IE**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/indias-road-safety-crisis/>

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