

FEATURED

While Modi Government Slow Pedals on Road Safety Bills, a New UN Resolution Brings Back Focus

BY GAURAV VIVEK BHATNAGAR ON 16/04/2016 • LEAVE A COMMENT

Pointing out that an average of 380 lives are lost in accidents every day, MPs and experts are pushing for new legislation to be passed.



Road accidents claimed 1.41 lakh lives in 2014. Credit: Biswarup Ganguly/Wikimedia Commons CC 3.0

Soon after Union Minister Gopinath Munde's death in a road accident in Delhi in June 2014, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had promised a strong road safety law. The Road Transport and Safety Bill 2014 was subsequently drafted and put in the public domain later the same year for comments and suggestions. But though a year and a half has lapsed since, and an average of 380 people die in road accidents across India every day, the bill has still not been introduced in parliament. This is despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi also bringing up the issue of road safety in his address to the nation via the *Mann ki Baat* radio programme.

With the UN general assembly adopting a road safety resolution on Friday, and calling on nations to adopt, implement and enforce road safety policies, the demand for pushing through this legislation in parliament has arisen once again. Incidentally, the UN resolution is in addition to the UN Decade of Action of Road Safety and the Sustainable Development Goals, which too had urged nations to take necessary action to reduce road crash deaths

by 50% by 2030.

Experts in the field of road transport and safety insist that a comprehensive legislative framework is the need of the hour to address safety of all classes of road users. Be it the recent incident

([https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=2&ved=oahUKEwiZovbRo5PMAhWHmZQKHRHTA1MQu4gBCCsoAzAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.abplive.in%2Fifestyle%2Fmercedes-hit-run-case-watch-speeding-mercedes-hits-man-in-delhi-317857&usg=AFQjCNEORlytgbqyqhF3elQULGH9Ro8-5oQ&sig2=TyYzwG6a_7OE5fe0Dw7FYQ&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

[https://www.google.com/url?](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&ved=oahUKEwjawrzso5PMAhVGJpQKHbvoB2QQqQIIHCgAMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ndtv.com%2Fdelhi-news%2Ffour-of-8-arrested-for-lynching-of-delhi-dentist-are-minors-say-police-1290520&usg=AFQjCNFutyCO1otOz8aWl9KnYtORlRU7BA&sig2=p4ZHvJN5_zH0EZOvgCdjzg&bvm=bv.119745492,d.dGo)

Contents of the bill

The draft Road Transport and Safety Bill was formulated by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to “provide a scientifically planned and evolving framework for the safety of all road users in India, including vulnerable road users, and for enabling the seamless development of a secure, efficient, cost-effective, sustainable and inclusive transport system for the movement of passenger and freight in the country as well as matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”

The draft bill proposed the creation of three agencies – National Authority for Road Safety, National Transport and Multimodal Coordination Authority and State Transport Authority – and sought to address almost all the key components of road traffic management. It had emphasised on stringent punishment for offenders, proposed the use of digital and surveillance systems for nabbing them, and suggested a points system for every offence to ensure that repeat offenders were taken off the roads.

The bill also called for streamlining the process of issuing licences and registration of vehicles by proposing a unified vehicle registration system, in which the process was linked to the fitness and insurance of the vehicle and offences committed by the vehicle had a bearing on their continuation on the road. In addition, it suggested a major role for the states in streamlining vehicular flow in their jurisdiction by urging them to use intelligent speed detectors and using driver alert control and eye drowsiness systems to prevent mishaps.

Though the bill had focused on technology solutions, some experts had criticised it (<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/indias-draft-road-safety-bill-focuses-more-on-penalty-and-technology-47122>) saying that it did not provide any clarity on monitoring and compliance strategies and institutional arrangements. They argued that despite the bill drawing from the best practices of six developed countries, namely United States, Canada, Singapore, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom, and proposing fines ranging from 5,000 to 50,000 rupees and even imprisonment of up to 7 years for certain categories of offences, it lacked clarity on how the fines would be raised from poor drivers. Some wondered how the penalty amount could be fixed without paying attention to the per capita income in India. Also, they pointed out that the bill was not clear on who would collect the fines and how these would be utilised.

Need for new legislation

The pros and cons of the bill notwithstanding, nearly 50 members of parliament had appealed to the prime minister to accord high priority to the bill in December. They had noted with concern the "epidemic of increasing road accidents in India" which had in 2014 claimed 1.41 lakh lives and left 4.81 lakh people severely injured. "Not only do these accidents cause an irreplaceable loss of human life but they are also responsible for huge economic drain for our country. According to the erstwhile Planning Commission of India, over 3% of India's GDP is lost to road accidents annually, and this amounted to 3.8 lakh crore rupees in 2014," the MPs pointed out.

The parliamentarians also demanded that a new legislation was the need of the hour, since at present the motorised transport in India is governed by the Motor Vehicle Acts 1988 which was enacted 27 years ago. Since then, deaths caused due to road accidents have increased by over 300% and the road transportation scenario has undergone a sea change, the MPs said.

The voice of the MPs has now found support from experts in the field. Piyush Tewari, founder of SaveLIFE Foundation, which had petitioned the government and the Supreme Court to enact the good samaritan law (<http://thewire.in/2016/03/30/sc-guidelines-now-protect-good-samaritans-who-help-road-accident-victims-26680/>) for providing speedy aid to road accident victims, said a new bill was urgently need. "To accomplish the goal of halving the road crash fatalities, India must bring a robust road safety legislation. The current legislation governing road transport in India, Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 is an obsolete legislation that fails to address road safety comprehensively. An issue which has received bipartisan political support must not be delayed any further and the government must introduce a comprehensive road safety bill in the Parliament at the earliest."

India also needs to take urgent steps in this direction to meet the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN general assembly in September 2015, which call for halving the deaths and

injuries from road accidents by 2020.

Road accidents remain the single largest cause of death among youngsters in the 15-29 age group, followed by suicide, HIV/AIDS and homicide.

What to read next:



We're Still Building Safer Roads for Cars, Not People In "Health"



With Chabahar Text Finalised, India's Dream of a Road to Afghanistan Gathers Speed In "Diplomacy"



Contradicting Gadkari, BJP MP RK Singh Says Helping Lalit Modi is Legally, Morally Wrong In "Politics"

📁 Categories: **Featured** (<http://thewire.in/category/featured/>), **Politics**

(<http://thewire.in/category/politics/>)

📌 Tagged as: **accident prevention** (<http://thewire.in/tag/accident-prevention/>), **Motor Vehicles Act** (<http://thewire.in/tag/motor-vehicles-act/>), **Narendra Modi** (<http://thewire.in/tag/narendra-modi/>), **Nitin Gadkari** (<http://thewire.in/tag/nitin-gadkari/>), **Piyush Tewari** (<http://thewire.in/tag/piyush-tewari/>), **road safety** (<http://thewire.in/tag/road-safety/>), **Road Transport and Safety Bill 2014** (<http://thewire.in/tag/road-transport-and-safety-bill-2014/>), **Sustainable Development Goals** (<http://thewire.in/tag/sustainable-development-goals/>), **United Nations** (<http://thewire.in/tag/united-nations/>)

0 Comments

The Wire

1 Login ▾

♥ Recommend

🔗 Share

Sort by Best ▾

Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON THE WIRE

India's Big Brother Approach Will Not Work With Nepal

2 comments • 5 days ago

samee1122 — our constitution is way more developed and inclusive than yours.please read

Modi Government Agrees in Principle to Give the US

1 comment • 6 days ago

Joshua B George — Excerpt: "it will enable India and the US to provide logistics and other

The Discreet Charm of Being Amitabh Bachchan

3 comments • 9 days ago

John Nash — the worst thing in indian media is that there is no follow up.what happened to

A Month Later, Art of Living Still To Pay NGT Fine

5 comments • 8 days ago

Shweta Tikoo — Exactly, and The Art of Living ought not to pay any fine for no fault on it's

✉ Subscribe
🔒 Privacy

➤ Add Disqus to your site Add Disqus Add

DISQUS