

SPEEDING MAJOR CAUSE OF DEATH

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (INFRASTRUCTURE) & GS PAPER-III (GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS)

CONTEXT: According to a study conducted by the **Lancet**, speeding is the major cause of death in India. As per the study, approximately 20,554 lives could be saved annually if steps are taken to curb over speeding.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The study addresses four key risk factors– **speeding, drunk driving, non-use of crash helmets and seat belts**, interventions to which could prevent 25% to 40% of the 13.5 lakh fatal road injuries worldwide annually.
- This is the first study that gives country-specific estimates for 185 countries based on the four major risk factors.
- The report uses mortality data from Global Burden Diseases (2017) that estimated around 2.18 lakh deaths due to road injuries in India in the year 2017.
- According to a 2020 report of the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highway**, road accidents caused a total of 1,31,714 deaths while **speeding** accounted for 69.3% of the deaths.
- On the other hand non-use of helmets and seat-belts resulted in 30.1% and 11.5% deaths respectively.

IMPACT OF ROAD ACCIDENTS

- **ECONOMIC:** India's socio-economic cost of road traffic accidents for the year 2019 was in the range of USD15.71 billion to USD38.81 billion, which amounts to 0.55–1.35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- **SOCIAL:** At the individual level, road crash injuries and deaths impose a severe financial burden and push entire (non-poor) households into poverty and the already poor into debt.
- **GENDER SPECIFIC IMPACT:** Women in the families of victims bear the burden across poor and rich households, often taking up extra work, assuming greater responsibilities, and performing caregiving activities.
- About 50% of women were severely affected by the decline in their +household income after a crash.
- About 40% of women reported a change in their working patterns post-accident, while around 11% reported taking up extra work to deal with the financial crisis.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Infrastructure changes can be done and electronic speed controls could be installed to reduce speeding.
- To tackle drunk driving enhanced enforcement of the rules is required.
- Similarly, rules pertaining to the use of seat belts and motorcycle helmets needs to be enforced stringently.

INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT

Motor Vehicles Amendment Act, 2019

- The Act hikes the penalties for traffic violations, defective vehicles, juvenile driving, etc.
- It provides for a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund, which would provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India for certain types of accidents.
- It also provides for a National Road Safety Board, to be created by the Central Government through a notification.

The Carriage by Road Act, 2007

- The Act provides for the regulation of common carriers, limiting their liability and declaration of value of goods delivered to them to determine their liability for loss of, or damage to, such goods occasioned by the negligence or criminal acts of themselves, their servants or agents and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Control of National Highways (Land and Traffic) Act, 2000

- The Act provides the control of land within the National Highways, right of way and traffic moving on the National Highways and also for removal of unauthorised occupation thereon.

The National Highways Authority of India Act, 1998

The Act provides for the constitution of an authority for the development, maintenance and management of NHs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

US-LED PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC (PBP)

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-II (GLOBAL INITIATIVES)

CONTEXT: Amid China's aggressive push to increase its Pacific sphere of influence, the US and its allies have launched a new initiative called 'Partners in the Blue Pacific'.

ABOUT THE PBP INITIATIVE

- The PBP is a five-nation "informal mechanism" to support Pacific islands and to boost diplomatic, economic ties in the region.

Allies: Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom.

- It aims at enhancing "**prosperity, resilience, and security**" in the Pacific through closer cooperation.
- It simply means that through the PBP, the ally countries would together and individually direct more resources to counter China's aggressive outreach.
- The initiative members have also declared that they will "elevate Pacific regionalism", and forge stronger ties with the Pacific Islands Forum.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

The areas where PBP aims to enhance cooperation include:

- climate crisis
- connectivity and transportation

- maritime security and protection
- health
- prosperity
- education

HOW IS CHINA TRANSFORMING ITS TIES IN THE PACIFIC?

- As China signed a security pact with Solomon Islands in April, the deal flagged serious concerns about the Chinese military getting a base in the southern Pacific, close to the US island territory of Guam, and right next to Australia and New Zealand.
- The deal is supposed to boost Beijing's quest to dominate crucial shipping lanes criss-crossing the region.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF PACIFIC AREA

- Spanning a vast stretch of the globe from the west coast of the United States to the western shores of India, the region is home to the world's most populous state (China), most populous democracy (India), and largest Muslim-majority state (Indonesia), and includes over half of the earth's population.
- Among the 10 largest standing armies in the world, 7 reside in the Indo-Pacific; and 6 countries in the region possess nuclear weapons.
- Nine of the world's 10 busiest seaports are in the region, and 60 percent of global maritime trade transits through Asia, with roughly one-third of global shipping passing through the South China Sea alone.

PRELIMS FACTS

IMPACT SITE ON MOON

- Recently, NASA's **Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter** has spotted a **double crater** that is an unusual impact site from unknown rocket on the moon.
- No other rocket body impacts detected so far on the moon have created double craters.
- Craters+ created by Saturn rockets that powered **Apollo missions were single, irregular in outline and substantially larger.**
- Researchers have concluded that the rocket is a **booster of Chang'E 5-T1** (Chinese Space Agency's lunar exploration program).

DYNAMIC WORLD

- Google has recently launched a new service called the 'dynamic world' which provides **near real time land cover data across the globe.**
- This service will help in **tracking the changes in the planet in response to various natural and human activities** like fires, floods, deforestation, urban development etc.
- This information will help scientists and policy makers to **monitor ecosystems and enable more accurate predictions as well as effective plans** to protect the planet from future disasters.

NUN CHO GA

- The **remains of a baby mammoth** called the Nun cho ga were discovered during excavation through the **permafrost south region in Canada's Yukon territory**.
- It is believed to be a female remain that would have died during the ice age, more than 30,000 years ago.
- Earlier, a partial mammoth calf named **Effe**, was found in the year 1948 at a gold mine in the interior of Alaska.

RIM OF THE PACIFIC (RIMPAC) EXERCISE 2022

- RIMPAC is the **world's largest naval wargame including the Quad countries and the nations around the South China sea**.
- RIMPAC 2022 is led by the US Navy and 27 countries are participating in the current edition of the multi-dimensional exercise including India.

GOING ONLINE AS LEADERS (GOAL) PROGRAMME

- The second phase of GOAL programme has been launched by the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
- GOAL programme is the joint initiative of **Facebook India with Ministry of Tribal Affairs** to provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode.
- It aims to **digitally upskill 10 lakh youth from tribal communities** and open up opportunities for them using digital technology.
- It will create a platform for self-help groups and families associated with TRIFED to take their products globally.