

Primus Partner Report

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India needs urgent overhaul of driver training, licensing to curb road accidents: Report



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Article Content:

India needs urgent reforms in its driver training and licensing ecosystem to address rising road accidents and fatalities, according to a report released by Primus Partners on Wednesday.

The report, titled '**Rethinking Driver Training: A Road to Safer Traffic**' said that despite stronger laws, stricter enforcement and improved infrastructure, road safety outcomes remain weak, pointing to deeper behavioural and systemic issues.

It noted that a large number of drivers enter the system without formal training and receive little or no reinforcement of skills after obtaining a licence, undermining the effectiveness of broader safety measures.

The report also flagged that India's licensing framework remains largely procedural and does not adequately assess real-world driving competence such as hazard perception, defensive driving and decision-making in complex traffic conditions.

The report recommended a shift towards competency-based licensing, structure training frameworks and continuous skill reinforcement, describing driver training as a "foundational" reform for improving road safety.

"Rethinking driver training is not a peripheral reform but a foundational one. Safer roads ultimately depend on drivers' awareness, judgement and sense of responsibility," said Aarti Harbhajanka, co-founder and managing director, Primus Partners.

The report also emphasised the need for behavioural change, with inputs from road safety advocates and industry experts.

“Road safety is not just about rules and regulations, it is a mindset that must be cultivated from an early age and reinforced consistently,” Raghavendra Kumar, also known as the Helmet Man of India.

Among key recommendations, the report proposed a phased reform approach including stronger training standards, technology-enabled testing and long-term monitoring of driver behaviour.

“Safety is not determined by engineering alone. The competence and preparedness of drivers remain critical,” said S N Dhole, Head-Technical Secretariat at the Central Institute of Road Transport.

The report called for a shift from a largely enforcement-driven model to a preventive, competency-led approach, positioning driver capability at the centre of India’s road safety strategy.