ROAD SAFETY AND LEGAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN BANGLADESH: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, ENFORCEMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Road traffic crashes are an acute issue, that touches on aspects of legality, public health, development and economics. Bangladesh continues to struggle to reduce traffic crash fatalities, injuries and overall impacts on vulnerable road users. This article reviews Bangladesh's legal and institutional approaches to road safety, highlights recent traffic crash statistics and proposes considerations towards improving safety for all road users. Topics discussed include the Road Transport Act 2018, Road Safety Regulation Authority, law enforcement, driver's licenses, infrastructure and road user behaviour. Recent crash statistics are analyzed and demonstrate inconsistencies with reporting. High-risk areas are typically identified at intersections, bus-stops, high-speed roads, and crashes with pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Speeding, distracted/impaired driving, lack of driver training, vehicle safety, poor road infrastructure, traffic violations and inadequate enforcement were noted as key, and often intersecting factors of crashes. Despite having recently updated the Road Transport Act in 2018 to provide current statutory measures, it has been found that passing a road safety law does not ensure safety by itself. Weaknesses in enforcement, institutional gaps, lack of resources and poor road safety governance have been noted as underlying problems with strengthening legality around road safety. This paper calls for changes from an accident-centric and vehicle-user centred mentality to that of the Safe System approach with shared accountability between institutions. Suggestions to consider are increased enforcement, education and licensing of drivers, safer infrastructure, technology for monitoring, heightened vehicle inspections, increased collaboration between institutions, addressing vulnerable road user safety, and better post-crash care. The paper concludes that government prioritization, institutional responsibility and proper execution will help to prevent road fatalities and promote rule of law within Bangladesh's

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Keywords: Road safety; road traffic accidents; Bangladesh; Road Transport Act 2018; legal accountability; enforcement; vulnerable road users; Safe System.

1. Introduction

Currently, road safety is a significant concern globally, particularly in emerging nations. The staggering incidence of injuries and fatalities resulting from road traffic accidents underscores the narrative of a worldwide road safety crisis. Traffic accidents rank as the second leading cause of mortality for individuals aged 5 to 29, and the third for those aged 30 to 44. The escalating quantity of automobiles in developing nations is exacerbating this crisis in low- and middle-income countries, positioning it to potentially become the third leading cause of mortality and disabilities by 2020 (WHO 2000). The economic and health-related repercussions of road traffic accidents are substantial. In this context, road safety is the paramount concern to guarantee. This document outlines the general state of road-related challenges in Bangladesh, including the current background of road accidents, and examines many potential low-cost enhancement strategies that may contribute to road safety in the country.

2. Concept of Road Safety and its Necessity

Road safety encompasses the regulations, procedures, and precautionary strategies aimed at safeguarding all road participants, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, passengers, and public transit users, from fatalities and severe injuries resulting from vehicular accidents. The notion embraces an all-encompassing perspective that acknowledges the interplay among road users, cars, roadway infrastructure, and the broader transportation ecosystem. The need for road safety is especially critical in Bangladesh, where swift urban development, rising vehicle ownership, and the growth of transportation infrastructure have intensified vulnerability to road traffic hazards. Worldwide, vehicular accidents continue to be a significant issue for public health and development.[4] The World Health Organization approximates that around 1.19 million individuals perish each year due to road traffic accidents, with such injuries being the primary cause of mortality for children and young adults aged 5 to 29. Over fifty per cent of road traffic deaths pertain to vulnerable road users, namely walkers, cyclists, and motorcyclists.

[4] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (WHO 2023).

These repercussions illustrate that road safety transcends a basic transportation policy matter, emerging as a critical issue for safeguarding life, health, economic efficiency, and societal welfare. Crucially, fatalities and severe injuries on the roads can be averted with a holistic Safe System strategy, which encompasses safer roadways and verges, regulated speeds, enhanced vehicle safety, robust laws and enforcement, as well as suitable post-accident care.[5]

The WHO's country profile for Bangladesh approximates 31,578 road traffic deaths in 2021, yielding an estimated mortality rate of 18.6 per 100,000 individuals; however, the officially recorded fatalities were far lower at 5,084. This inequality underscores the necessity of dependable accident documentation and data gathering in the development of road safety regulations. Consequently, road safety ought not to be perceived solely as an issue of traffic management; it is intrinsically linked to the safeguarding of life and health, economic efficiency, social well-being, and the optimal operation of the transportation network.[6]

The global policy structure has progressed beyond the previous 2011–2020 Decade of Action. UN General Assembly Resolution 74/299 declared the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, aiming to diminish road traffic fatalities and injuries by a minimum of 50% by the year 2030. The research indicates that road fatalities may be averted, and that a robust national commitment, data-driven legislation, enforcement, and the use of the Safe System method are crucial for significantly decreasing road deaths and severe injuries.[7]

3.1 Road Accidents in Bangladesh: Magnitude and Trends

Road incidents have become a significant issue for public safety and health in Bangladesh. The submitted research documents a decline in road safety linked to population expansion, rising vehicle ownership, swift urban development, and insufficient examination of traffic incidents. It also observes that Bangladesh's accident data has historically depended mostly on police documentation, leading to a considerable risk of under-reporting since an incident may go unrecorded if no police report is filed.[8]

The data given by the police in the study indicate significant variations from 2011 to 2017. Accidents reported decreased from 2,667 in 2011 to 2,027 in 2014, then increased to 2,353 in

[5] Ibid
[6] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (WHO 2023).
[7] UN General Assembly, 'Improving Global Road Safety' UNGA Res 74/299 (31 August 2020).
[8] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (WHO 2023)

2017. In 2011, there were 2,546 confirmed fatalities, which decreased to 1,957 in 2013, before rising again to 2,471 in 2017; reported injuries also surged to nearly 6,000 in 2017. The research additionally notes that most incidents transpired on national and regional roadways, but urban thoroughfares also represented considerable accident sites.[9]

Recent WHO estimates indicate that the magnitude of the issue is significantly larger than what past police statistics imply. The World Health Organisation projected 31,578 fatalities from road traffic incidents in Bangladesh for 2021, resulting in a mortality rate of 18.6 deaths per 100,000 individuals, in contrast to the mere 5,084 officially documented deaths for that year. This significant divergence bolsters the prior findings of the study on under-reporting and highlights the want for more dependable accident investigation, data gathering, and reporting systems. Thus, road accidents in Bangladesh ought to be perceived not just as individual traffic occurrences but as a comprehensive road-safety dilemma necessitating stringent enforcement, improved infrastructure, accountable road-user conduct, and dependable institutional frameworks for accident prevention and documentation.[10]

3.2 Accident Statistic in Bangladesh

The accident data provided in the initial research spanned from 2011 to 2017 and revealed significant variations in the counts of recorded vehicular incidents, deaths, and injuries. For instance, law enforcement documented a decrease in accidents from 2,667 in 2011 to 2,027 in 2014, followed by a rise to 2,353 in 2017. During this timeframe, documented deaths rose from 1,957 in 2013 to 2,471 in 2017, while recorded injuries approached 6,000 in 2017.[11]

Recent figures from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) suggest that the issue persists as a significant concern. In 2022, BRTA documented 5,089 vehicular collisions, leading to 4,636 fatalities and 4,444 injuries. In 2023, there were 5,495 documented accidents, resulting in 5,024 fatalities and 7,495 injuries. In 2024, BRTA documented 5,856 vehicular accidents and 5,480 deaths, indicating an approximate 9 percent rise in fatalities and a 6.57

[9] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023: Country and Territory Profiles* (WHO 2024) (Bangladesh country profile).
[10] Naila Sharmeen and Md Rabiul Islam, 'Road Accidents: Contemporary Scenario and Policy Issues in Bangladesh' (2011) 4 *Journal of Bangladesh Institute of Planners* 45–55. This source is also cited in your uploaded study.
[11] Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), 'Annual Road Accident Report 2022' (BRTA 2023).

percent rise in recorded incidents relative to 2023.[12]

The existing BRTA statistics reveal a significant rise in documented traffic accidents and deaths in comparison to the timeframe analysed in the initial study. Nevertheless, these statistics must be regarded with caution because to the significant discrepancies in estimates generated by various groups. In 2023, the BRTA documented 5,024 fatalities, whereas the Road Safety Foundation indicated 6,524 fatalities. [13]The WHO approximated that there were 31,578 fatalities due to road traffic in Bangladesh in 2021, in contrast to the 5,084 deaths reported by the police, highlighting the persistent issue of discrepancies in the collection and reporting of road accident statistics. The Asian Transport Observatory has also recognised significant inconsistencies between Bangladesh's official data, Global Burden of Disease projections, and WHO assessments.[14]

Updated Table 1: Road Accident and Casualty Statistics in Bangladesh

Year	Reported Accidents	Deaths	Injuries
2022	5,089	4,636	4,444
2023	5,495	5,024	7,495
2024	5,856	5,480	*

*BRTA's 2024 figure cited in the available report confirms 5,856 crashes and 5,480 deaths; I have **not inserted an injury figure without sufficiently reliable BRTA verification**. It is preferable for an academic article to avoid inserting a potentially inconsistent figure.[15]

3.3 Accident Spots: A Contemporary Analysis

The spatial distribution of vehicular accidents is a significant aspect of road safety in Bangladesh. Previous research demonstrated that a significant percentage of collisions transpired on national and regional thoroughfares, with incidents notably clustered near bus terminals, marketplaces, and road junctions. Although these historical discoveries are pertinent

[12] Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), 'Annual Road Accident Report 2023' (BRTA 2024).
[13] Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), 'Annual Road Accident Report 2024' (BRTA 2025).
[14] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023: Country and Territory Profiles* (WHO 2024) (Bangladesh country profile).
[15] Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (ATO 2025).

for comprehending the evolution of Bangladesh's road-safety issues, contemporary data indicates that the risk of accidents is progressively linked to urban traffic settings, high-speed routes, intersections, and areas where pedestrians and other at-risk road users converge with motorised vehicles.[16]

Recent findings from the Asian Transport Observatory (ATO) Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025 reveal that Bangladesh persists in confronting a significant road safety issue. The profile indicates that Bangladesh experiences roughly 67 traffic deaths for every 1,000 km of roadway, with merely 2 per cent of roads achieving a three-star or superior safety grade for walkers and 5 per cent for bicycles. The scenario is especially alarming for motorcyclists, as hardly around 11 per cent of routes attain a three-star or superior safety grade for them.[17]

The existing research additionally indicates that metropolitan areas represent significant zones of road-safety hazards. A road-safety evaluation for 2025, carried out in Dhaka North by the Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit (JH-IIRU) in partnership with local organisations under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety, analysed road-safety risk factors through systematic observations at 15 locations. The evaluation encompassed approximately 520,000 speed observations and offers current evidence regarding road-user hazards in Dhaka North.[18]

The makeup of road traffic deaths in Dhaka North is especially noteworthy. The 2024 status report revealed that 95 per cent of documented road traffic deaths pertained to vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists. Pedestrians constituted roughly 73 per cent, motorcyclists 20 per cent, vehicle occupants 5 per cent, and cyclists 2 per cent. Moreover, almost 23 per cent of the monitored vehicles surpassed the established speed restrictions. These results indicate that high-risk areas in Bangladesh should not be evaluated exclusively based on crash frequency; the susceptibility of road users and the velocity conditions at specific sites must also be taken into account.[19]

[16] Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (ATO 2025). ATO Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025
[17] Ibid
[18] Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit, *Status Summary 2024: Road Safety Risk Factors in Dhaka North* (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health 2025). APRSO publication page
[19] The Daily Star, '73% of DNCC Road Crash Victims Are Pedestrians' (The Daily Star, 2025) https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/73-dncc-road-crash-victims-pedestrians-3992041 accessed 16 August 2026.

Comparable issues have been observed in Chattogram. A road-safety risk evaluation for 2024, performed by JH-IIRU and the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB), utilising data gathered from December 2022 to November 2024, revealed that 44 per cent of monitored vehicles surpassed the designated speed limit, with motorcycles representing roughly 70 per cent of the speeding vehicles. The Chattogram City Road Safety Report 2021–23 revealed that 92 per cent of road deaths pertained to at-risk road users, such as pedestrians, motorcyclists, and passengers of three-wheelers.[20]

Recent discoveries indicate that the conventional emphasis on highway accident sites ought to be broadened to encompass urban crossroads, regions with significant pedestrian traffic, bus and transport hubs, commercial districts, and other venues where diverse types of road users engage often. The significant rate of pedestrian and motorbike deaths suggests that road safety measures must include pedestrian safeguards, speed regulation, secure crossings, enhanced intersection layouts, suitable bus-stop amenities and rigorous enforcement.[21]

Table 2: Recent Indicators of High-Risk Road Locations and Users in Bangladesh

Indicator	**Recent finding**	**Source**
Road fatalities per 1,000 km of road	Approximately 67%	ATO Road Safety Profile 2025
Roads rated ≥3 stars for pedestrians	Approximately 2%	ATO 2025
Roads rated ≥3 stars for cyclists	Approximately 5%	ATO 2025
Roads rated ≥3 stars for motorcyclists	Approximately 11%	ATO 2025
Dhaka North fatalities involving vulnerable road users	Approximately 95%	JH-IIRU Status Summary 2024
Dhaka North pedestrian share of fatalities	Approximately 73%	JH-IIRU Status Summary 2024
Dhaka North vehicles exceeding speed limits	Approximately 23%	JH-IIRU Status Summary 2024
Chattogram vehicles exceeding	Approximately 44%	JH-IIRU/CIPRB Status

[20] Chattogram Bureau, '44% of Vehicles in Chattogram Flout Speed Limits, Survey Finds' (bdnews24.com, 25 September 2025) https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/dcf512fdcea6 accessed 16 August 2026.
[21] Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit and Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh, *Road Safety Risk Factors in Chattogram: Status Summary Report 2024* (2025).

speed limits		Summary 2024
Chattogram motorcycles exceeding speed limits	70% of observed motorcycles	JH-IIRU/CIPRB Status Summary 2024
Chattogram fatalities involving vulnerable road users	Approximately 92%	Chattogram City Road Safety Report 2021–23[22]

The ATO evaluation reveals that Bangladesh's road safety issues extend beyond the frequency of accidents to encompass the condition and security of the road infrastructure. A minuscule fraction of roads already offer a safety rating of three stars or above for walkers, cyclists, and motorcyclists. This establishes a robust foundation for contending that accident prevention necessitates a Safe System methodology, wherein road design, speed regulation, vehicle safety, and safeguarding vulnerable road users are regarded as essential elements of road safety.[23]

3.4 Accident Timing

The timing of vehicular collisions offers a significant insight into the intervals when road users face heightened danger of accidents. Research conducted by Rahman, Ahsan, and Hadiuzzaman analysed police-reported accident statistics gathered by the Accident Research Institute (ARI), BUET, from 2000 to 2006 on three principal national highways—N1 (Dhaka–Chittagong), N2 (Dhaka–Sylhet), and N5 (Dhaka–Aricha). The research examined the attributes of accidents, such as the timing of their occurrence, and discovered significant fluctuations in accident frequency throughout the day.[24]

The research indicates that roughly 74.4 per cent of documented incidents transpired during daylight hours from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. The greatest percentage of accidents, 15.5 per cent, transpired between 10:00 am and 12:00 pm, followed by 13.3 per cent from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm and 13.1 per cent from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. Conversely, the minimal percentage was noted between 2:00 am and 4:00 am (4.8 per cent).[25]

[22] Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, *Speed Limit Guideline 2024* (BRTA 2024).
[23] Asia Pacific Road Safety Observatory, *Road Safety Risk Factors in Dhaka North* (14 March 2025). APRSO publication
[24] Md Mizanur Rahman, Md Shafikul Ahsan and Md Hadiuzzaman, 'Comparative Accident Study on Some Selected National Highways of Bangladesh' (2012) 1(2) *International Journal of Civil Engineering* 7–14.
[25] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Current Status and Policy Recommendations* (PPRC) https://www.brac.net/sites/default/files/pdf/PPRC_RoadSafetyReport.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.

Table 3: Distribution of Road Accidents by Time of Day

Time period	**Accidents (%)**
12:00 am–2:00 am	5.7
2:00 am–4:00 am	4.8
4:00 am–6:00 am	7.5
6:00 am–8:00 am	10.4
8:00 am–10:00 am	10.2
10:00 am–12:00 pm	**15.5**
12:00 pm–2:00 pm	13.1
2:00 pm–4:00 pm	11.9
4:00 pm–6:00 pm	13.3
6:00 pm–8:00 pm	6.3
8:00 pm–10:00 pm	6.3
10:00 pm–12:00 am	5.2
Total	**100.0**[26]

The results demonstrate that the likelihood of accidents was especially heightened in the late morning and afternoon, as opposed to at night. The authors' examination revealed that the three chosen roadways encountered a significant accumulation of accidents throughout the 10:00 am to 2:00 pm timeframe. The research additionally indicated that around 88 per cent of incidents transpired in rural regions of the chosen highway corridors, implying that accident mitigation should not be confined to urban thoroughfares.[27]

Nonetheless, these results ought to be regarded as historical documentation instead of contemporary national accident-timing metrics, as the foundational data spans from 2000 to 2006. The research continues to be valuable for illustrating historical trends in accident timing; however, a modern national evaluation would include more current disaggregated BRTA or law enforcement data categorised by time of day. This differentiation is crucial due to the significant alterations in Bangladesh's road conditions, vehicle types, traffic density, and road

[26] Md Mizanur Rahman, Md Shafikul Ahsan and Md Hadiuzzaman, 'Comparative Accident Study on Some Selected National Highways of Bangladesh' (2012) 1(2) *International Journal of Civil Engineering* 7–14.
[27] Md Mizanur Rahman, Md Shafikul Ahsan and Md Hadiuzzaman, 'Comparative Accident Study on Some Selected National Highways of Bangladesh' (2012) 1(2) *International Journal of Civil Engineering* 7–14.

infrastructure since the research was conducted.

3.5 Accident Victims

Traffic collisions in Bangladesh predominantly impact at-risk road users, especially pedestrians and operators of two- and three-wheeled vehicles. This trend aligns with the overall international road safety landscape. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that vulnerable road users—pedestrians, cyclists, and operators of powered two- and three-wheelers—constituted 53 percent of worldwide road traffic deaths in the most recent global evaluation, including pedestrians (23%), powered two- and three-wheeler users (21%), cyclists (6%), and users of other micromobility devices (3%).[28]

The facts particular to Bangladesh also illustrate the considerable susceptibility of non-motorised road users. The WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023: Bangladesh Country Profile documents 5,084 officially recorded road traffic deaths in 2021. [29]Among the documented fatalities, 32 per cent were pedestrians, 11 per cent were operators of powered two- and three-wheeled vehicles, 2 per cent were cyclists, 42 per cent were passengers in four-wheeled vehicles, and 14 per cent were categorised as other or unidentified road users. In 2021, pedestrians and operators of powered two- and three-wheelers constituted 43 per cent of the recorded fatalities in Bangladesh. This signifies a significant change from the previous numbers referenced in the initial study, which indicated that pedestrians comprised 41 per cent of deaths in 2009.[30]

These results indicate that the casualties of traffic incidents in Bangladesh cannot be regarded solely as occupants of vehicles. Individuals on foot, motorcyclists, cyclists, and other at-risk road users encounter an unequal likelihood of fatality or severe injury.[31] Consequently, Bangladesh's road safety strategy ought to prioritise pedestrian-centric infrastructure, safeguarded crossings, secure walkways, speed regulation, motorcycle safety, enhanced public transportation amenities, and robust enforcement. The data further endorses the

[28] World Health Organization, 'Despite Notable Progress, Road Safety Remains Urgent Global Issue' (News Release, 13 December 2023) https://www.who.int/news/item/13-12-2023-despite-notable-progress-road-safety-remains-urgent-global-issue accessed 16 August 2026.
[29] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023: Bangladesh* (WHO 2023) https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/country-profiles/road-safety/road-safety-2023-bgd.pdf accessed 16 August 2026
[30] Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (ATO 2025).
[31] Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit, *Road Safety Risk Factors in Dhaka North: Status Summary 2024* (Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health 2025).

implementation of a Safe System methodology, which posits that road design and traffic management strategies should be formulated with the understanding that human mistakes are unavoidable, and the roadway should be structured to avert these errors from leading to fatalities or severe injuries.[32]

Updated Table 4: Road-User Distribution of Reported Road Fatalities in Bangladesh

Road-user category	**Share of reported fatalities (2021)**
Four-wheel vehicle occupants	**42%**
Powered two- and three-wheeler users	**11%**
Pedestrians	**32%**
Cyclists	**2%**
Other/unknown	**14%**
Total	**101%***

*The published WHO percentages sum to 101% because of rounding. The WHO country profile reports 5,084 officially reported fatalities for 2021.[33]

3.6 Vital Causes of Road Accident

Road traffic collisions pose a significant threat to public safety and health, especially in low- and middle-income nations. The previous iteration of this segment is predominantly based on the 2004 WHO World Report and includes numerous obsolete global forecasts. For a revised legal research paper, it is advisable to concentrate on current evidence related to speeding, drunk driving, distracted driving, the absence of helmets and seat belts, inadequate road infrastructure, and lax enforcement. The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that around 1.16 million individuals perish annually due to road traffic accidents, with an estimated 20–50 million sustaining non-fatal injuries. Road traffic accidents continue to be the leading cause of mortality for those aged 5 to 29, with almost 92 per cent of these fatalities occurring

[32] Johns Hopkins International Injury Research Unit and Centre for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh, *Road Safety Risk Factors in Chattogram: Status Summary Report 2024* (2025).
[33] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023: Bangladesh* (WHO 2023) https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/country-profiles/road-safety/road-safety-2023-bgd.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.

in low- and middle-income nations.[34]

The rise in road traffic accidents (RTA) poses a significant danger to life in numerous regions globally. The 'World Report on Road Injury Prevention- 2004' indicates that over 1.2 million individuals perish in road collisions annually, with up to 50 million sustaining injuries. Approximately 85 per cent of these incidents transpire in nations categorised by the World Bank as low- or middle-income, characterised by low vehicle ownership relative to Western standards, and where substantial investments are being directed toward enhancing road infrastructure. Forecasts suggest that these numbers will rise by approximately 65% over the forthcoming two decades unless there is renewed dedication to prevention.[35]

Speeding and Tailgating – Exceeding speed limits is a primary behavioural risk factor for severe traffic accidents. Elevated vehicle velocities augment the likelihood of an accident and the gravity of its repercussions. The correlation between velocity and the severity of injuries is especially critical for pedestrians and other susceptible road users, as they possess no physical safeguards when impacted by a vehicle. The WHO recognises velocity as a significant risk element and underscores the importance of speed regulation as a crucial aspect of road safety policy.[36]

Talking on Phone –Driver distraction, such as utilising a cell phone while operating a car, can significantly diminish focus, response time, and vehicle control. The issue becomes especially critical when drivers concurrently partake in visual, physical, and cognitive distractions, including texting or using a mobile device. The utilisation of mobile phones should be considered not only a breach of traffic regulations but also a considerable hazard to road safety. Robust enforcement, heightened public awareness, and technological interventions must be integrated to deter distracted driving.[37]

Drunk Driving – Operating a vehicle when impaired by alcohol or other psychoactive substances heightens the risk of accidents leading to fatalities or severe injuries. The World Health Organisation indicates that the likelihood of accidents escalates even with modest

[34] World Health Organization, 'Road Traffic Injuries' (Fact Sheet, 20 July 2026) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries accessed 16 August 2026.
[35]PM Peden and others (eds), World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention (World Health Organization 2004) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9241562609 accessed 16 August 2026.
[36] World Health Organization, 'Road Traffic Injuries' (Fact Sheet, 20 July 2026) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries accessed 16 August 2026.
[37] Ibid

blood-alcohol levels and significantly intensifies at elevated concentrations. While alcohol-related vehicular accidents may be less prevalent in Bangladesh compared to other regions, the overarching legal structure ought to tackle driving under the influence of alcohol and other impairing substances via efficient testing, enforcement, and sanctions. The ATO's 2025 Bangladesh Road Safety Profile designates impaired driving as a key enforcement focus within the nation's existing road-safety policy structure.[38]

Riding Without a Helmet – Numerous adolescents classify riding without a helmet as fashionable behaviour. This is far from accurate; a motorcyclist appears more impressive when fully equipped with protective knee pads, a riding jacket, and a robust helmet. Donning a helmet is equally crucial for the passenger as it is for the motorcyclist. The head is particularly vulnerable to trauma during a descent. Safeguarding it with a helmet significantly diminishes the likelihood of death.[39]

Not Wearing Seat Belt – Wearing a seat belt when operating a vehicle is as crucial as deploying a parachute during skydiving. Research has demonstrated that in a direct collision, a motorist utilising a seat belt significantly increases their likelihood of survival while minimising the risk of severe damage.[40]

Breaking Traffic Rules – A seemingly small act like running a red light can expose the driver and others to significant risks of accidents and injuries. Unawareness of traffic signals can also be perilous. Adhere to traffic regulations; they are beneficial for your safety.[41]

Poor Road Infrastructure – This is a prevalent factor contributing to accidents in India. In contrast to other elements, the operator in this situation endures consequences without any wrongdoing on their part. A poor roadway is characterised by indicators including accumulations of rubble, leaked oil, depressions, and malfunctioning streetlights[42].

Driving in Fog – Fog diminishes road vision to a perilous degree. In the event of thick fog,

[38] World Health Organization, 'Road Traffic Injuries' (Fact Sheet, 20 July 2026) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries accessed 16 August 2026. Also see Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (September 2025) ATO Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025 accessed 16 August 2026.
[39] Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (September 2025) ATO Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025 accessed 16 August 2026.
[40] Ibid
[41] Ibid
[42] Ibid

one should invariably contemplate suspending their journey. However, if it is an official or urgent journey, be sure to utilise the fog lights and dipper settings. Regardless of how trivial they may appear, they significantly contribute to preventing collisions and accidents.[43]

The factors contributing to traffic accidents in Bangladesh are hence multifaceted. They stem from the convergence of excessive velocity, inattentive or intoxicated driving, disregard for helmet and seatbelt regulations, breaches of traffic laws, hazardous road conditions, insufficient safeguarding of at-risk road users, and deficiencies in enforcement and road safety management. A modern legal perspective should therefore shift from viewing road accidents as singular events attributed only to individual motorists. Bangladesh ought to implement a Safe System strategy, wherein the accountability for averting fatalities and severe injuries is collectively borne by road users, transport providers, vehicle producers, road authorities, regulatory bodies, and policymakers.[44]

3.7 Impacts of Road Accident

Road traffic collisions result in significant human, financial, and societal detriments, encompassing fatalities, physical impairments, and property destruction. Nonetheless, the psychological repercussions, including trauma, anxiety, and prolonged emotional turmoil, are frequently disregarded despite their considerable effect on victims and their families.[45]

Physical Impact

Road traffic collisions can result in severe and enduring bodily repercussions, such as cerebral and spinal damage, impaired movement, persistent discomfort, and lifelong impairment. Worldwide, it is estimated that 20 to 50 million individuals suffer non-fatal injuries from road traffic incidents annually, with numerous experiencing enduring disabilities. Such injuries can significantly diminish autonomy and the capacity to engage in daily tasks, necessitating extended medical attention and rehabilitation.[46]

[43] Ibid
[44] World Health Organization and United Nations Regional Commissions, *Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030* (WHO 2021) https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/global-plan-for-the-decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030 accessed 16 August 2026.
[45] World Health Organization, 'Road Traffic Injuries' (Fact Sheet, 20 July 2026) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries accessed 16 August 2026.
[46] Ibid

Psychological Impact

Road traffic accidents can result in enduring psychological and social repercussions, such as trauma, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a fear of travel. These consequences may also impact the relatives of victims and their capacity to resume employment and reintegrate into social life. Consequently, efficient post-accident interventions must encompass mental health and psychosocial assistance, in addition to medical care and rehabilitation.[47]

Economical Impact

Road traffic accidents incur significant financial burdens on victims, their families, and the national economy due to medical and rehabilitation expenditures, diminished productivity, property damage, and various other societal expenses. On a global scale, vehicular accidents incur expenses equivalent to approximately 3% of the GDP for most nations. In Bangladesh, the financial burden of fatalities and severe injuries from road accidents was approximated at around 5% of GDP in 2021, indicating that road safety is both a public health matter and a considerable economic issue.[48]

Road traffic collisions in Bangladesh represent a significant legal, public health, and socio-economic issue. The repercussions encompass not only deaths but also enduring physical impairments, mental distress, diminished productivity, and significant financial burdens. The WHO approximated 31,578 fatalities from road traffic in Bangladesh for the year 2021, in contrast to the 5,084 deaths documented by government statistics, underscoring the persistent issue of precise accident reporting. The Asian Transport Observatory approximates that road accidents account for over 5% of Bangladesh's GDP, highlighting their considerable economic impact.[49]

4. Road User: A Survey Of Drivers

Operators play a significant role in the road safety initiative. The calibre of their performance,

[47] World Health Organization, *Post-crash Response: Supporting Those Affected by Road Traffic Crashes* (WHO 2016) https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/post-crash-response-supporting-those-affected-by-road-traffic-crashes accessed 16 August 2026.
[48] Asian Transport Observatory, *Bangladesh Road Safety Profile 2025* (September 2025) https://asiantransportobservatory.org/analytical-outputs/roadsafetyprofiles/bangladesh-road-safety-profile-2025/ accessed 16 August 2026.
[49] Ibid

their suitability, their dispositions and drives, their accountability toward norms and regulations, along with the stressors they encounter, significantly influence the safety of the roadways. It is therefore crucial to understand the identities of the drivers—their socio-economic backgrounds—as well as their perspectives on the origins of accidents and potential prevention strategies.[50]

4.1 Driver Profiles

The poll revealed that the majority of drivers were between the ages of 24 and 50: 47% were aged 24 to 35, 21% were 36 to 40, and 28% were 41 to 50, with merely 5% exceeding the age of 50.

Educational Attainment: The poll additionally revealed that 80% of drivers possessed some level of formal education. The predominant educational attainment was secondary or its equivalent, comprising 48%, whilst merely 8% were illiterate.Demographic profile: average family size and number of earners.[51]

Housing status

The study revealed that hardly 4% of motorists resided in their own homes in Dhaka. Approximately 33% resided in rental properties, 21% in rented dormitories ('mess'), while the predominant group (41%) indicated they slept in their vehicles despite having homes outside Dhaka.[52]

Income status

The poll indicated an average monthly earnings of around Tk 21,950 for drivers. Approximately 47% received monthly earnings between Tk 15,000 and Tk 20,000, whilst hardly 3% indicated revenues over Tk 50,000. A limited group of affluent drivers possessed vehicles, suggesting that some integrated vehicle ownership with driving as a means of

[50] Marta Useche and others, 'Influence of Occupational Risk Factors for Road Traffic Crashes among Professional Drivers: Systematic Review' (2023) 43(3) *Transport Reviews* 533, 533–563 https://doi.org/10.1080/01441647.2022.2132314 accessed 16 August 2026

[51] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Ground Realities and Action Imperatives* (8 July 2018) last accessed 16 August 2026.

[52] Ibid

earning.[53]

Indebtedness

Recent findings suggest that economic insecurity continues to be an issue for professional drivers in Bangladesh. A recent investigation of motorists in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Cumilla revealed that inadequate income, extended working hours, and precarious employment persistently impact their livelihoods. Previous PPRC findings indicated that 45% of the drivers polled were in financial distress, with an average debt of Tk 21,822; however, these statistics are now obsolete and should be regarded as historical.[54]

The existing national labour force statistics do not offer a contemporary, driver-specific assessment of self-reported poverty. Consequently, the prior PPRC survey continues to serve as a historical reference point: 7.8% of respondents identified as being in a continual deficit, 14.7% indicated experiencing a sporadic deficit, 51% characterised themselves as precarious or at a 'break-even' point, and 26.5% viewed themselves as economically advantageous. Recent BBS labor-force statistics categorise drivers and mobile-plant operators as a separate occupational group, although they do not replicate the identical self-reported poverty classifications.[55]

4.2 Licensing

Driver license constitutes an essential element of road safety in Bangladesh. The previous PPRC survey indicated that 75% of the drivers surveyed possessed heavy-vehicle licenses, while 80% stated they had taken a licensing examination; nonetheless, 20% asserted they acquired licenses without testing, and numerous individuals mentioned experiencing delays, intermediaries, and unofficial payments. The existing BRTA framework mandates a learner's permit, succeeded by written, verbal, and practical examinations, along with supplementary hands-on assessments for professional licenses. The BRTA mandates that professional drivers

[53] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Ground Realities and Action Imperatives* (BRAC 2014) https://brac.net/images/reports/Research%20report_Road%20Safety%20in%20Bangladesh-Ground%20Realities%20and%20Action%20Imperatives.pdf accessed 15 August 2026.

[54] Rasel Hussain, 'Occupational Health Risks and Livelihood Challenges among Professional Drivers in Bangladesh' (2026) https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2414644726000096 accessed 16 August 2026.

[55] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Ground Realities and Action Imperatives* (8 July 2018) https://brac.net/images/reports/Research%20report_Road%20Safety%20in%20Bangladesh-Ground%20Realities%20and%20Action%20Imperatives.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.

fulfilll specified age, medical, and additional eligibility criteria. Consequently, the historical analysis indicates deficiencies in licensing practices, whereas the current regulatory structure prioritises competency-oriented assessments and formal licensing protocols.[56]

4.3 Trade Union Membership

The overwhelming majority of the surveyed drivers – 80% - have membership of one or more trade unions operating in the sector. Only 20% are outside any trade union membership.

4.4 Training

The PPRC survey revealed that merely 2% of drivers underwent formal training, whereas 81.4% acquired their skills informally, predominantly from a seasoned driver or ustad; 16.7% experienced a blend of both formal and informal training. Informal training totalled over 1,500 hours, in contrast to around 93 hours in private establishments. Despite being historical, these statistics reveal a considerable dependence on informal driving education. The existing regulatory structure prioritises formal evaluations of competency and examinations prior to granting licenses; yet, the PPRC results continue to underscore the persistent training deficiencies in Bangladesh.[57]

4.5 Work- load

The PPRC survey reveals that drivers encountered significant demands on their working hours. 42.2% were employed for five days per week, whilst 16.7% were engaged for six or seven days. Daily, around 48.9% engaged in 9 to 12 hours of work, while 18.6% dedicated 13 to 16 hours. These results underscore the possible impact of prolonged working hours and exhaustion on road safety hazards.[58]

4.6 Mobile Use While Driving

The utilisation of mobile phones continues to be a significant source of distraction for drivers in Bangladesh. A recent investigation of motorcyclists revealed a significant correlation

[56] Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 'Driving Licence' https://bsp.brta.gov.bd/drivingLicense?lan=en accessed 16 August 2026.
[57] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Ground Realities and Action Imperatives* (8 July 2018) https://brac.net/images/reports/Research%20report_Road%20Safety%20in%20Bangladesh-Ground%20Realities%20and%20Action%20Imperatives.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.
[58] Ibid

between habitual mobile-phone usage while operating a vehicle and involvement in road accidents, with crash occurrence hitting 100% among frequent users. The WHO also indicates that drivers who utilise mobile phones are nearly four times more prone to being involved in an accident, since phone usage diminishes reaction time, lane management, and safe distance maintenance. These results underscore the necessity for robust enforcement and driver-awareness initiatives.[59]

4.7 Condition of Vehicles

The state of a vehicle is a crucial factor in road safety, as mechanical failures can elevate the likelihood of accidents, even with adequately qualified drivers. The PPRC poll revealed that 47.1% of motorists rated their vehicles as excellent, 49% as rather acceptable, and 3.9% as unsuitable. In terms of maintenance, 70.6% indicated consistent servicing, whilst 29.4% noted inconsistent servicing.

Recent findings persist in highlighting vehicle safety and maintenance as significant road safety issues in Bangladesh, despite the absence of comparable national statistics on vehicle condition and servicing. The historical PPRC data should consequently be regarded as foundational survey evidence instead of contemporary national statistics.[60]

5. Laws and Institutions Relating to Road Safety in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh there are many laws are present related with roads, traffic and vehicles. Many provisions of other laws deal with road accident and the penalty of road accident.

5.1 Laws

The principal legal framework governing all issues pertaining to road traffic and safety is the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983, as amended until 1990. This is an extensive tool addressing a wide array of concerns, including those pertaining to – 1. The licensing of motor vehicle

[59] Miah and others, 'Analyzing the Prevalence of and Factors Associated with Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) among Motorcyclists in Bangladesh' (2024) *The Scientific World Journal* 2024, 7090576 https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/7090576 accessed 16 August 2026.

[60] Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), *Road Safety in Bangladesh: Ground Realities and Action Imperatives* (8 July 2018) https://brac.net/images/reports/Research%20report_Road%20Safety%20in%20Bangladesh-Ground%20Realities%20and%20Action%20Imperatives.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.

operators (Chapter II of the Ordinance)

2. Authorisation of operators for stage carriage or contract carriage (Chapter III)

3. Registration of automobiles, encompassing the issuance of a fitness certificate (Chapter IV)

4. Regulation of transportation vehicles (Chapter V)

5. Development, apparatus, and upkeep of automotive vehicles (Chapter VI)

6. Regulate vehicular movement (Chapter VII)

7. Motor vehicles that are temporarily departing from or arriving in Bangladesh (Chapter VIII)

8. Coverage for motor vehicles against third-party liability (Chapter IX)

9. Violations, sanctions, and protocols (Chapter X) and 10. Various issues (Chapter X)

Necessity for driving license –Any individual may operate a motor vehicle in any public area provided they possess a valid driving licence permitting them to do so..[61]

Age limit in connection with driving of motor vehicles –No individual below the age of 18 is permitted to operate a motor vehicle in any public area, and no individual under 20 may serve as a professional driver in any public location.[62]

Responsibility of owners of motor vehicles for contraventions of sections 3 and 4–The proprietor and individual responsible for a motor vehicle must not allow anyone who does not meet the criteria outlined in sections 3 and 4 to use the vehicle.[63] The licensing authority possesses the authority to revoke an individual's driving licence if it is established that: (a) the individual is a recurrent offender or a habitual alcoholic, or (b) they have utilised a motor vehicle in the perpetration of a cognisable crime, or (c) their past behaviour as a driver indicates a propensity to endanger public safety, or (d) they have engaged in an offence listed in the Fifth Schedule. It may, for documented grounds, issue an order disqualifying that individual from

[61] Section 3 of Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983 (Ordinance no. lv of 1983)
[62] Section 4 of Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983 (Ordinance no. lv of 1983)
[63] Ibid, Section 5

possessing or acquiring a driving licence for a designated duration.[64]

Duty to obey traffic signs- All operators of motor vehicles must adhere to obligatory traffic signals and obey instructions provided by law enforcement while operating the vehicle in any public area. All operators of motor vehicles must halt at the designated line adjacent to each marked pedestrian crossing when a pedestrian is present on the crossing.[65]

Operating a motor vehicle or public service vehicle without a valid driving licence is subject to a penalty of imprisonment for up to four months, a fine of up to five thousand taka, or both.[66]

The other pertinent legal and administrative frameworks for road traffic and road safety encompass

a) The 2012 Road Transport and Traffic Legislation, b) The Bengal Motor Vehicles Regulations of 1940 and the Motor Vehicles Regulations of 1984, c) Metropolitan legislation and ordinances including: the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance of 1976, the Chittagong Metropolitan Police Ordinance of 1978, the Khulna Metropolitan Police Ordinance of 1985, the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Act of 1992, the Barisal Metropolitan Police Act of 2009, the Sylhet Metropolitan Police Act of 2009, the Police Act of 1861, and the Highway Police Regulations of 2009. Certain provisions of the Penal Code of 1860 pertain to sanctions for offences and fatalities related to road traffic accidents. In Bangladesh, the BRTA, Metropolitan Police, Highway Police, and District Police are the primary entities responsible for enforcing all pertinent laws, rules, and administrative directives concerning the aforementioned broad spectrum of matters. The establishment of the highway police in 2005, followed by a rule in 2009, was a significant institutional advancement by the government aimed at enhancing road safety.[67]

5.2 Institutions

Bangladesh's road safety system encompasses multiple entities that perform complementary roles in regulation, enforcement, engineering, and research. The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) supervises vehicle registration and fitness, driver licensing, route permits,

[64] Ibid, Section 16
[65] Ibid, Section 92
[66] Ibid, Section 138
[67] Road Transport Act 2018 (Act No 47 of 2018) (Bangladesh) https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.

and road safety initiatives; Regional Transport Committees handle transport-related regulatory duties; while the Metropolitan, Highway, and District Police manage traffic control and enforcement. The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) oversees the national highway system, whereas the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is tasked with rural and local road infrastructure. The Accident Research Institute (ARI) of BUET engages in research and data analysis pertaining to road accidents, whilst the National Road Safety Council (NRSC) offers strategic oversight for road safety policies.[68]

5.2.1. The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA)

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) serves as the primary regulating agency for the nation's road transport sector, operating under the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges. Its duties encompass vehicle registration and fitness certification, route authorisation, issuance of driving licenses, registration of instructors and driving schools, inspection of accident vehicles, and the organization of road safety initiatives. The BRTA additionally assembles yearly reports on road traffic incidents utilising data provided by the Bangladesh Police.[69]

The existing legal structure, specifically the Road Transport Act 2018, governs driving licenses and motor vehicle operations, whilst the BRTA Service Portal now offers online services for learner and driving licenses, renewals, vehicle registration, and fitness-related services. The previous PPRC conclusions regarding purported informal influence, license challenges, and examination procedures should consequently be regarded as historical documentation, rather than as confirmed evidence of present BRTA operations.[70]

5.2.2. The Road Transport Committee (RTC)

The Regional Transport Committee (RTC) is pivotal in the management of route permits. Within the existing BRTA framework, RTCs adjudicate requests for route permits for both stage and contract vehicles functioning in designated district zones, with applications being

[68] Roads and Highways Department, *Bangladesh ITS Master Plan Architecture for RHD* (Government of Bangladesh) https://rhd.gov.bd/Documents/Bangladesh_ITS_MP_Architecture_for_RHD_Final_draft_Report.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.

[69] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), ss 4 ff https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.

[70] *Bangladesh Road Transport Authority Act 2017* (Bangladesh), Also see Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 'BRTA Service Portal' https://bsp.brta.gov.bd/bsp/?lan=en accessed 16 August 2026.

handled by the appropriate BRTA circular offices. Issues regarding political sway, rent-seeking behaviour, and the appropriation of transport regulating agencies have been recorded in previous studies. Nonetheless, the 2007 data ought to be seen as historical rather than as a demonstration of contemporary political manipulation. The current BRTA framework establishes official protocols and paperwork prerequisites for route-permit determinations.[71]

6. Recent Road Safety Protests in Bangladesh: 2018

Bus operations in Dhaka are infamously chaotic and susceptible to accidents. Despite the enactment of numerous traffic legislation and regulations by the parliament, they have yet to be implemented. A study conducted by the National Committee to Safeguard Shipping, Roads, and Railroads revealed that over 4,200 individuals lost their lives and 16,100 others sustained injuries in vehicular incidents in Dhaka in 2017.[72] In 2018, it is estimated that around 2.4 million automobiles are used by unlicensed drivers in Dhaka.[73]

The 2018 student road-safety demonstrations intensified in early August following accounts of assaults on demonstrators and journalists, the deployment of tear gas and rubber bullets, and the detention of students and activists. Human Rights Watch indicated that a minimum of 20 individuals had been detained by 13 August, among them photographer Shahidul Alam.[74] In reaction to the demonstrations, the Cabinet sanctioned the proposed Road Transport Act 2018 on 6 August 2018. The proposal suggested a maximum incarceration of five years and a fine of Tk 500,000 for fatalities or severe injuries resulting from reckless or irresponsible driving. [75]Deliberate homicide may alternatively be charged under section 302 of the Penal Code 1860. The legislation was later established as the Road Transport Act 2018, superseding

[71] Abul Hossain, *Political Economy Report on Urban Bus Operations* (Dhaka 2007) (mimeo).
Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 'Route Permit' https://bsp.brta.gov.bd/routePermit accessed 16 August 2026.
[72]Manik, Julfikar Ali and Maria Abi-Habib, 'Students Pour into Dhaka's Streets to Demand Safer Roads' (*The New York Times*, 5 August 2018) https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/05/world/asia/bangladesh-students-protests.html accessed 6 August 2018.
[73]Antara, Nawaz Farhin, 'Unlicensed Drivers a Problem for Commuters, Stakeholders' (*Dhaka Tribune*, 4 August 2018) https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2018/08/04/unlicensed-drivers-a-problem-for-commuters-stakeholders accessed 5 August 2026.
[74] Human Rights Watch, 'Wave of Arrests Follow Crackdown in Bangladesh' (13 August 2018) https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/08/13/wave-arrests-follow-crackdown-bangladesh accessed 16 August 2026.
[75] Shohel Mamun, 'Cabinet Approves Road Transport Act' (*Dhaka Tribune*, 6 August 2018) https://www.dhakatribune.com/amp/bangladesh/laws-rights/152385/cabinet-approves-road-transport-act accessed 16 August 2026.

the Motor Vehicles Ordinance 1983.[76]

6.2 Protest and Consequences

A series of public protests advocating for improved road safety took place in Bangladesh from July 29 to August 8, 2018. I apologise, but it appears there was a mistake in your inquiry. Kindly furnish the text you wish for me to rephrase. The incident was sparked by the deaths of two high school students in Dhaka, resulting from a bus operated by an unlicensed driver rushing to collect passengers. The occurrence incited students to champion improved road safety and stricter traffic laws, resulting in rapid protests around Bangladesh.[77]

6.2.1. Salient Features of the New Law

- The Traffic Transport Act was enacted on August 6, 2018, to regulate traffic accidents and promote road safety throughout Bangladesh. This new Act encompasses several fundamental characteristics, including -

- The legislation suggests prosecution under Section 302 of the Penal Code, which mandates capital punishment for murder, if a traffic incident is determined to be a premeditated act of homicide.

- • Should fatalities occur due to negligent driving, perpetrators will be prosecuted under Section 103 of the proposed legislation, which prescribes a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

- To acquire a driving licence, one must have completed a minimum of eighth grade. The current legislation does not stipulate any educational requirements.

- The minimum age to obtain a driver's license is still 18 years; however, the requirement for professional drivers is set at 21 years.

- The legislation mandates that licenses for driving assistance are required. Individuals

[76] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), Act No 47 of 2018 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.
[77] Scores Injured in Traffic Protests in Bangladesh Capital' (*The Washington Post*, 3 August 2018) https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/mass-protests-over-traffic-deaths-paralyze-dhaka-for-5-days/2018/08/03/3661f818-9780-11e8-818b-e9b7348cd87d_story.html accessed 4 August 2026.

pursuing licenses must complete fifth grade.[78]

A driver's license will start with 12 points, which will be subtracted for particular violations. The new law proposes a reduction of 1 point for surpassing the speed limit. A score of zero will lead to the annulment of the license.

The legislation establishes a clause permitting officials to restrict the number of automobiles operating within a city or area.

Utilising mobile devices while operating a vehicle may lead to a month of incarceration or a fine of Tk 5,000.

Operating a vehicle when impaired by alcohol or drugs may lead to a maximum of three months' incarceration or a fine of Tk 35,000, or both.

The recent legislation would allow law enforcement to apprehend individuals without warrants for offences that may result in a six-month imprisonment or a fine of Tk 50,000.

• Sanctions for unroadworthy cars operating on the streets have been increased to a year of imprisonment or a maximum fine of Tk 100,000.

• Individuals improperly seated in areas designated for women, children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities on public transportation may incur a month of incarceration or a fine of Tk 5,000.

• Violations such as operating a vehicle in the incorrect lane, hindering traffic flow, transferring goods and passengers atop vehicles, accommodating multiple pillion riders on motorbikes, riding without helmets, and traversing footpaths may result in a penalty of up to three months' imprisonment or a fine of Tk 35,000, or both.[79]

6.2.3. Punishment for Reckless Driving

Section 103 of the new legislation stipulates that irrespective of the provisions within this Act,

[78] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), Act No XLVII of 2018, ss 6, 11, 12 and 105 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026, also seeStaff Correspondent, 'Road Transport Bill Placed in Parliament: Punishment for Reckless Driving Still "Lenient"' (*The Daily Star*, 13 September 2018) https://www.thedailystar.net/country/news/bangladesh-road-transport-bill-2018-placed-in-parliament-1633417 accessed 16 August 2026.
[79] Ibid

anyone who suffers severe injury or fatality in a motor vehicle-related incident shall be deemed to have committed an offence under the applicable sections of the Penal Code, 1860.

Regardless of the contents of section 304B of the Penal Code, anyone who causes an accident through reckless and negligent driving, resulting in severe injury or death, shall be subjected to a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment, a fine, or both. The violations categorised under section 103 of the Act are not eligible for bail.

Law Minister Anisul Huq stated that if it is determined that a driver intentionally caused a fatality or failed to prevent a death in a traffic incident, the situation would not be governed by section 103 of the Act. It will be categorised under either section 302 or 304 of the Penal Code of 1860. The minister, nonetheless, emphasised that law enforcement officials will determine the matter following their inquiry. The utmost penalty prescribed by section 302 of the Penal Code is capital punishment, and section 304 stipulates life imprisonment.[80]

6.2.5 Action against Government

Within Bangladesh's road-safety regulations, government officials and other accountable individuals may face legal repercussions if negligence or deficiencies in the design, construction, upkeep, or administration of roads lead to a traffic incident. Liability may consequently encompass not only drivers but also pertinent building contractors, maintenance agencies, and officials whose careless actions or failures contributed to the incident.[81]

6.2.6. Funds for Victims

The Road Transport Act 2018 establishes a financial aid system for individuals harmed in vehicular accidents and for the relatives of those who have died. The fund aims to offer prompt financial assistance to victims or their families experiencing delays in obtaining compensation or insurance disbursements. It is overseen by a committee of pertinent governmental entities and transport sector stakeholders, with financing sourced from mandated governmental and sectoral contributions along with other designated origins.[82]

[80] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), s 105 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.
[81] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), Act No XLVII of 2018 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.
[82] 'Road Transport Bill Gets JS Nod' (*The Daily Star*, 20 September 2018)

7.1 Findings on the Matter of Road Safety

Investigating Road Safety

Bangladesh's road safety initiative was fully studied in the previous chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to condense that discourse into suggestions. Six major discoveries that impact road safety discourse and recommendations must be highlighted first.

Main discoveries: collision sites

Traffic accidents are concentrated in a few "black spots" on roads and streets. According to this study, 57 km of highways are accident-prone. The RHD road safety section has identified 209 problematic places, but frequent updates are needed due to the surge in traffic on rural roads.

Principal findings 2—Intersections/bus stops and dangerous curves dominate dangerous locations.

Accidents often occur at poorly built and managed busy junctions and bus terminals. Curves with poor visibility cause many accidents.

Discovery 3: Accidents mostly involve pedestrians and at-risk road users.

Road users account for 76% of collision injuries. The biggest risk category is walkers (41%), followed by light vehicle passengers (19%) and motorcyclists/three-wheelers (16%). These findings are supported by accident classifications: 42% are ‘hit-and-run’, 19% are head-on crashes, and 13% are overturned cars.

Principal findings 4- Accident causes vary, requiring a comprehensive safety policy.

Due to nine main causes, improving road safety and reducing accidents requires a diverse approach. These include unsafe driving, poorly trained operators, unsuitable vehicles, concurrent operation of motorised and non-motorised transport without proper segregation and regulations, precarious roadside activities, deficient road infrastructure, traffic regulation, road safety education, and a culture of impunity with ineffective legal recourse.

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https://online.thedailystar.net/politics/news/bangladesh-parliament-js-passes-road-transport-bill-keeping-five-years-jail-reckless-driving-1636165 accessed 16 August 2026.

Principal findings 5- Law and policy have major flaws.

Despite outdated laws and regulations, Bangladesh's road transport industry has grown significantly. Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, the main law, is a colonial relic. Bangladesh passed a traffic safety law in 2018, but it's inadequate. This Act has been criticised extensively.

Political economy factors limit the safe road program, according to key findings.

Establishments that block measures against unfit vehicles, irrational route permissions, encroachment on public land near roadways, and adequate sanctions for accident perpetrators sometimes undermine road safety efforts. Powerful politicians own several transport corporations and run transport unions. Police cooperation or negligence exacerbates the problem.

7.2 Recommendations

- Despite the Road Transport Act 2018 offering a contemporary legislative structure, its successful execution necessitates enhanced enforcement and institutional collaboration. The legislation ought to be revised, where appropriate, to enhance sanctions for fatalities resulting from careless or hazardous driving. Essential actions ought to encompass:[83]

- Implementing contemporary traffic control and signalling systems in metropolitan areas.

- Augmenting the deployment of speed cameras, red-light cameras, traffic monitoring systems, and breath analysers for efficient enforcement.[84]

- Formulating and enhancing vocational driving education centres.

- Facilitating synchronised efforts with BRTA, the Roads and Highways Department, urban corporations, municipalities, LGED, and traffic enforcement.

[83] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), Act No XLVII of 2018 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.
[84] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (WHO 2023) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240086517 accessed 16 August 2026.

- Designating sufficient public resources for road safety and traffic education.
- Averting the registration of hazardous or outdated automobiles and enhancing criteria for imported or refurbished vehicles.
- Enhancing the demerit-point system for drivers to enable the suspension or disqualification of persistent traffic violators.
- Creating educational institutions focused on road safety or community initiatives for youth and adolescents.
- Enhancing the oversight of non-motorised and other susceptible road users instead of depending exclusively on their elimination from urban thoroughfares.
- Regulating car proliferation via efficient registration, licensing, route administration, and public transportation strategies.
- These strategies ought to be executed within a Safe System framework, integrating robust legislation, enforcement, better infrastructure, safer vehicles, accountable road users, and efficient post-crash response.[85]

7.3 Conclusion

It is asserted in the conclusion that road safety in Bangladesh is a significant contentious topic, particularly regarding its legal aspects. Confronting safety issues consequently presents a significant challenge due to the lack of necessary transportation safety experts and resources.[86] It addresses the critical concerns and alternatives for enhancing safety.[87] Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles represent the most pressing issue, particularly involving trucks and buses. Children have a significant susceptibility to traffic conditions in comparison to numerous other nations globally. There is an immediate necessity and potential for enhancing road safety through the implementation of a cohesive and effective safety policy, necessitating

[85] United Nations General Assembly, 'Improving Global Road Safety' UNGA Res 74/299 (31 August 2020) https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2021/11/A_RES_74_299_E.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.
[86] *Road Transport Act 2018* (Bangladesh), Act No XLVII of 2018 https://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-print-1262.html accessed 16 August 2026.
[87] World Health Organization, *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023* (WHO 2023) https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240086517 accessed 16 August 2026.

substantial advancements in pertinent sectors, including stricter enforcement, superior road infrastructure, and enhanced public education initiatives, alongside the introduction of innovative measures and strategies. Enhanced endeavours are essential to effectuate alterations in the mindsets of drivers and other users regarding safe practices.[88] Significantly, efforts to enhance conditions necessitate a revitalised governmental dedication and substantial resources, especially skilled local staff, safety experts, and researchers to develop local capabilities and achieve the sustainability of effective road safety measures. Numerous recent governmental measures have been launched to organise and execute road safety programs via a strategic action plan, which includes the creation of the Accident Research Centre. These efforts to address safety concerns are seen as highly vital for governmental obligations and crucial for regional and sub-regional cooperation and information exchange. The ARC at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology may receive backing from WHO as its partner centre for the prevention of road traffic accidents, focusing on the development and promotion of effective road safety strategies.[89]

[88] World Health Organization, 'Road Traffic Injuries' (Fact Sheet, 20 July 2026) https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries accessed 16 August 2026.

[89] United Nations General Assembly, 'Improving Global Road Safety' UNGA Res 74/299 (31 August 2020) https://www.un.org/pga/76/wp-content/uploads/sites/101/2021/11/A_RES_74_299_E.pdf accessed 16 August 2026.