

# Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya launches Youth Road Safety Learners Licence Programme

Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways and Chemical & Fertilizer today launched the Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi today. The programme is a PPP initiative to be run in collaboration with Diageo India and the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE), and attempts to bring a formal and structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner's license.

Launching this first-of-its-kind training programme in the country, Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya said, road safety is of prime importance for the Government as recent times have seen an alarming rise in road fatalities especially among the youth. Rash driving, drunken driving, lack of adequate safety measures like not wearing helmets are some of the major factors resulting in high road accidents. He said, the government is committed to making its vision of safer roads and cities a reality. This programme will help the Government achieve its target of reducing road accidents by 50 percent by 2020.

Additional Secretary in the Ministry Ms Leena Nandan said, every individual road user is a brand ambassador for road safety. She informed that India accounts for 12.5 per cent (over 1.45 lakh fatalities a year) of global road accidents, with one road accident occurring every four minutes. Alarming, 72 per cent victims involved in such road mishaps are between the age groups of 15-44 years with speeding, reckless and drunk driving being the top reason accounting for 1.5 per cent of road traffic accidents and 4.6 per cent of fatalities. She welcomed the mainstreaming of road safety in formal education system.

Shri Abhay Damle, Joint Secretary in the Ministry said, the Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme is a step toward addressing this grave issue by improving road safety awareness amongst young adults by inculcating behavioural change and creating awareness about responsible driving habits. The programme is an immersive and interactive module led by senior faculty members of IRTE covering varied aspects of responsible driving including defensive driving, ill

effects of driving under the influence of alcohol, speeding and wearing of helmets spread over two days.

Dr. Rohit Baluja, President of the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE), said, the young generation is the most vulnerable on Indian roads. Every effort must be made to ensure their safety. This programme adopts the means of creating awareness amongst youth so that they become defensive road users. In the first year, the programme will cover 20 universities with a total of 400 programme across the country.

IRTE has been successfully running its 'Road to Safety' initiative to provide capacity building training to traffic police officials and educate commercial drivers such as truckers and bus drivers and university students on the dangers of drunken driving. The programme has trained over 4624 traffic officials in road safety capacity-building, 6,000 commercial vehicle drivers and over 5,000 university students in more than 64 cities of 17 states.

Ms Abanti Sankaranarayanan, Chief Strategy and Corporate Affairs Officer, Diageo India also spoke on the occasion.

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