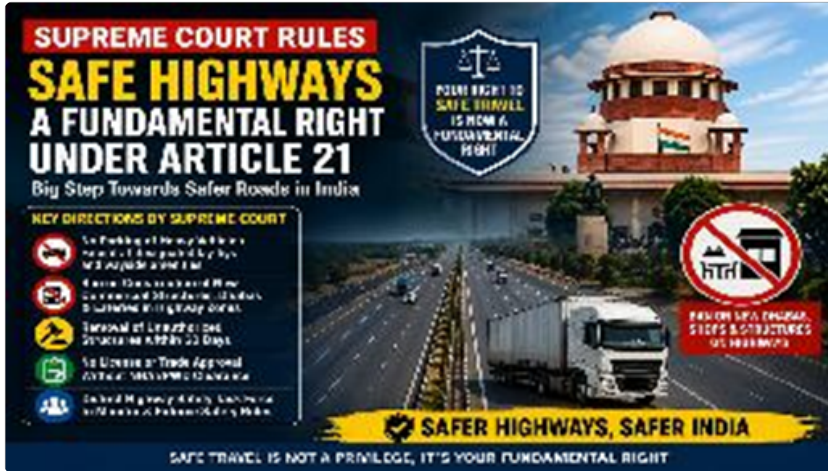




KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Road Safety Recognised Under Fundamental Rights:

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The Supreme Court of India has expanded the scope of the Right to Life under Article 21, declaring that safe road travel is an essential component of this fundamental right.

The ruling emerged from a suo motu case following two road accidents in November 2025 that resulted in 34 deaths, highlighting systemic failures in road safety.

Core Constitutional Interpretation:

The Court emphasised that:

Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) is not limited to mere survival

It includes the right to a safe and secure commuting environment

The State has a positive obligation to ensure protection from avoidable hazards

Thus, road safety has been elevated from a policy concern to a justiciable constitutional mandate.

Key Judicial Directions:

Invoking its extraordinary powers under Article 142, the Court issued a 13-point directive to central and state authorities.

Major directions include:

Addressing black spots and accident-prone zones

Removal of illegal parking and encroachments on highways

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Strengthening highway surveillance mechanisms

Ensuring better coordination among agencies like NHAI and state authorities

Time-bound implementation of safety measures

These directives aim to tackle administrative lapses and infrastructural gaps.

Data Highlighting the Issue:

National Highways constitute only ~2% of India's road network

Yet account for nearly 30% of total road fatalities

This disproportionate data underscores the urgency of systemic reforms in road infrastructure and governance.

Constitutional Provisions Involved:

Article 21 ? Guarantees right to life and personal liberty

Article 142 ? Empowers Supreme Court to pass orders for "complete justice"

The judgment reflects the judiciary's trend of expanding fundamental rights through interpretation.

Governance and Policy Implications:

Converts road safety into a legal obligation of the State

Enhances accountability of road authorities and enforcement agencies

Strengthens citizen rights in public infrastructure

Promotes preventive governance and disaster mitigation

Supports India's efforts to reduce road accident fatalities