SC Rules on Road Safety

What is the issue?

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- The Supreme Court recently pronounced its verdict on a PIL regarding road safety.
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- The order despised the apathy over enforcing road safety rules.
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What are the court's earlier directions?

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- The periodic directions of the Supreme Court have not produced any dramatic change in the official attitude.
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- Even the setting up of the “Committee on Road Safety” by the court to help implement its recommendations hasn’t brought good results.
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- Currently, in its order passed for a PIL, the court provided for actionable points with deadlines for implementation.
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- Importantly, all states and union territories have been asked to announce a “Road Safety Action Plan” by March 2018.
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- A “Road Safety Fund” in all states and UTs has also been mandated, the corpus for which would come from traffic fines collected.
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What are the structural flaws?

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- The absence of a scientific approach to accident investigation in India

remains a major factor in fixing responsibility.
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- Other than the failed attempt to create a “National Road Safety & Traffic Management Board”, no effort has been made in this regard.
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- The current SC orders also provide a road map to States to form District Road Safety Committees under the District Collectors.
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- This should ensure that someone is accountable when citizens file complaints on hazardous conditions.
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What are the challenges?

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- Around 1.5 lakh people died in accidents in 2016, which represents a 3.2% rise over the previous year.
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- The most effective measure to keep roads safe is enforcement of rules with zero tolerance to violations.
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- While stringent penalties are being called for, even the existing minor penalties are not being imposed.
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- Also, road conditions remain hazardous due to poor engineering.
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- Notably, only half of the accidental death victims had received insurance compensation.
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- All these are proof of the indifference in the system, and there is hence a need to make the system more responsive and responsible.
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Source: The Hindu

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