

## MOTOR VEHICLES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

**Prelims:** Governance- Policies

**Mains:** GS-II- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

### Why in News?

- ✚ Minister for Road Transport and Highways has been in the news as he pushes the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in Parliament.
- ✚ The amendments proposed by the government to the existing Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 essentially focus on improving road safety.

### Key elements of the Proposed Amendment:

#### Minimum Compensation:

- ✚ The Bill proposes to increase the minimum compensation for hit and run cases.
- ✚ In particular, in case of death, such compensation would vary from Rs 25,000 to Rs 2 Lakh. In the case of grievous injury, it would vary from Rs 12,500 to Rs 50,000.
- ✚ Beyond road safety, the Bill also increases penalties for several offences such as driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

#### Cashless treatment of victims:

- ✚ The Bill also enables the Central government to develop a scheme for cashless treatment of road accident victims during the “golden hour” (first 60 minutes following the injury during which doctors have the best chance of saving a life).

#### Accident Fund:

- ✚ The government's insurance scheme is likely to be funded through a Motor Vehicle Accident Fund that the central government is expected to constitute to provide compulsory insurance cover to all road users in India.
- ✚ This fund will be available for the treatment of the injured.

#### Defining Good Samaritan:

- ✚ The Bill also defines a good Samaritan as a person who renders emergency medical or non-medical assistance to a victim at the scene of an accident.
- ✚ However, to be seen as one, such assistance must have been given in good faith, voluntarily, and without the expectation of any reward.

- ✚ If these conditions are met, such a person will not be liable for any civil or criminal action for any injury to or death of an accident victim, caused due to their negligence in assisting the victim.

### **National Road Safety Board:**

- ✚ The Bill also proposes a National Road Safety Board which will advise the central and state governments on all aspects of road safety and traffic management.
- ✚ The Bill also enables the central government to order a recall of motor vehicles if it is found that they are defective and can cause harm to other road users or the environment.
- ✚ In case of such a recall, the manufacturers would either have to replace the faulty vehicle or pay full compensation to the customer.

### **Regulating Digital Intermediaries:**

- ✚ The Bill also attempts to plug a policy gap that has been introduced by the emergence of shared economy concepts and technology.
- ✚ As such, it defines taxi aggregators as digital intermediaries or market places which can be used by passengers to connect with a driver for transportation purposes.
- ✚ These aggregators will be issued licenses by state, but they must also comply with the Information Technology Act, 2000.

