

## Arming the Traffic Cop in Delhi

### Why in news?

\n\n

\n

- Delhi Police have decided to allow higher ranking traffic cops to carry side-arms to enforce better traffic control.

\n

- This move is ill-advised and fraught with risk.

\n

\n\n

### Why is it futile?

\n\n

\n

- The apparent reason for this move is to help the traffic police cope with the growing instances of road rage.

\n

- Incidence of assaults on police personnel seeking to impose traffic rules has indeed seen an uptick.

\n

- But, as most policemen are simply run over by rule breakers, it is unclear on how arming cops with pistols, solve the problem.

\n

- Also, in a state like Delhi, arming the traffic police will see retaliatory arming by habitual offenders, thereby accelerating breakdown.

\n

- Though formal gun licences are difficult to procure, the easy access to crude country-made pistols will prove a menace.

\n

- Notably, PCR vans, who are the first responders in any crime, are equipped with weapon-carrying personnel anyway.

\n

\n\n

### What could be a better alternative?

\n\n

- \n
- While stricter enforcement increase traffic compliance, in Delhi, powerful citizens regularly pull ranks to avoid traffic tickets.
- \n
- Also, rampant bribing of the traffic cops has also reduced the regulations to a mockery.
- \n
- Addressing these basic issues would contribute immensely rather than arms which is just a lazy substitute for lack of political will.
- \n
- **Drunken Drive** - This was a deeply entrenched menace in Delhi for long & a campaign against it was launched with strong political backing.
- \n
- Despite the patchy ground level implementation, it did yield considerable results, with Delhi-ites seeking an increased reliance on Taxi services after parties.
- \n
- This approach needs to be widened to ensure compliance for other traffic rules too, with a strong political will.
- \n

\n\n

### **What are the experience elsewhere?**

\n\n

- \n
- Kolkata's traffic cops have been armed for some decades without much issues.
- \n
- But the culture evolved due to the Naxalites menace in the 60s, which clearly isn't the case with Delhi.
- \n
- Arming cops in the US has also been largely negative, as social prejudices have led cops to shoot without substantial reason.
- \n

\n\n

- \n
- In the US, traffic and dashboard cameras have often nailed the lie and enabled victims to sometimes secure justice.
- \n
- Indian vehicles are still loaded with relatively basic features and it will be a while before they catch up.
- \n

- Thus, arming Delhi's traffic police will only serve to make the public more vulnerable, not less.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: Business Standard**

\n

