IoT-Based Driver Drowsiness Detection System

[1]SHAHJAHAN SHAIKH, [2]TALHA KHAN, [3]FAIZAN KHAN, [4]SHAHNAWAZ KHAN, [5]ABDUL REHMAN ANSARI

[1]Designation of 1st Author, [2]Designation of 2nd Author, [3]Designation of 3rd Author

[12345]Department of Computer Engineering

[12345]Rizvi College of Engineering, Mumbai, India

[1]shahjahanshaikh@eng.rizvi.edu.in, [2]talhakhan7674@eng.rizvi.edu.in, [3]faizannkhan72@eng.rizvi.edu.in, [5]faizannkhan72@eng.rizvi.edu.in

***Abstract*—Driver fatigue is one of the leading causes of road accidents worldwide, often resulting in serious injuries and fatalities. This paper presents an IoT-based Driver Drowsiness and Alcohol Detection System that monitors a driver's alertness in real-time using embedded sensor technology. The system employs an eye-blink sensor (IR-based) to detect prolonged eye closure as an indicator of drowsiness, and an MQ-3 alcohol sensor to detect alcohol consumption. An Arduino UNO microcontroller processes sensor data and triggers immediate alerts via a buzzer and motor speed reduction when unsafe conditions are detected. Both detection modules operate independently and in parallel, ensuring that either condition triggers an appropriate safety response without requiring manual driver input. The system is designed to be low-cost, non-intrusive, and suitable for real-world vehicular applications.**

Testing demonstrated accurate detection performance, with the buzzer activating consistently when eyes remained closed beyond the 3-second threshold. Future enhancements include GPS integration, cloud- based IoT monitoring, and machine learning-based detection for improved accuracy.

***Index Terms*—IoT, Driver Drowsiness, Eye-Blink Sensor, Alcohol Detection, MQ-3, Arduino, Road Safety**

I. Introduction

Road accidents caused by driver fatigue and alcohol consumption represent a major global safety challenge. Traditional vehicle safety systems focus primarily on collision avoidance but fail to monitor the physiological state of the driver in real time. With the advancement of Internet of Things (IoT) and embedded system technologies, it has become feasible to develop practical, low-cost systems that continuously monitor driver alertness and intervene before accidents occur.

This paper presents an IoT-based Driver Drowsiness and Alcohol Detection System that uses an infrared eye-blink sensor and an MQ-3 gas sensor connected to an Arduino UNO microcontroller. The system provides real-time alerts through a buzzer and can reduce motor speed when unsafe conditions are detected, serving as a practical embedded safety solution for modern vehicles.

1. Background and Motivation

Driver fatigue and alcohol consumption are among the primary contributing factors to road traffic accidents globally. Studies consistently indicate that drowsy driving impairs reaction time, decision- making, and situational awareness at levels comparable to alcohol impairment. Despite this, most modern vehicles lack automated systems capable of detecting driver fatigue without complex hardware.

The proliferation of affordable microcontrollers and sensor modules has opened new avenues for building practical embedded safety solutions. The motivation for this project lies in creating a low-cost, reliable, and easily deployable system that addresses both drowsiness and alcohol detection within a single unified platform.

2. Problem Statement

The primary challenges addressed in this work are:

- Difficulty in detecting driver drowsiness in real time without complex vision systems
- Absence of automatic alcohol detection integrated with vehicle safety mechanisms
- Lack of immediate alert systems that respond to unsafe driver conditions without manual input
- Reliability constraints imposed by environmental variability such as lighting conditions
- Over-reliance on driver self-awareness for safety

3. Research Objectives

The key objectives of this system are:

1. Develop a continuous monitoring system using an IR-based eye-blink sensor to detect drowsiness
2. Integrate an MQ-3 alcohol sensor for real-time intoxication detection
3. Process sensor data using an Arduino UNO microcontroller for real-time decision-making
4. Generate immediate buzzer alerts when unsafe conditions are detected
5. Reduce vehicle motor speed as an automated safety response
6. Design a low-cost, reliable, and easy-to-implement system suitable for various vehicle types

4. Scope and Limitations

The scope of this project includes eye-blink based drowsiness detection, alcohol level detection using the MQ-3 sensor, real-time buzzer alerts, and motor speed control. The system is applicable to cars, buses, and commercial vehicles. Limitations include potential sensor accuracy variations due to lighting and sensor placement, absence of advanced machine learning, and no remote IoT monitoring in the current implementation.

II. Review of Literature

This section presents a critical review of prior work on driver drowsiness detection, embedded safety systems, and related sensor-based approaches.

1. Real-Time Driver Drowsiness Detection Using Arduino and IR Sensor

Attribute	Details
Authors	Kumar & Reddy (2021)
Journal	International Journal of Engineering Research

Method	Eye blink detection using IR sensor and Arduino
Key Finding	Accurate real-time detection of eye closure
Limitations	Affected by lighting conditions; limited accuracy

Kumar and Reddy proposed a system using an IR-based eye-blink sensor connected to an Arduino microcontroller to detect driver drowsiness in real time. When prolonged eye closure was detected, the system triggered a buzzer alert. While the approach proved effective under controlled conditions, performance degraded under varying lighting environments. This work forms a direct basis for the current project, with enhancements including combined alcohol detection and motor speed control.

2. Driver Fatigue and Alcohol Detection Using Embedded Systems

Attribute	Details
Authors	Kaur & Singh (2019)
Journal	International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering
Method	Eye blink sensor with MQ-3 alcohol sensor using Arduino
Key Finding	Combined detection improves driver safety
Limitations	No IoT integration; limited advanced features

Kaur and Singh proposed a combined drowsiness and alcohol detection system using an eye-blink sensor and MQ-3 sensor with Arduino. The integration of two detection parameters improved overall reliability. However, the system lacked IoT-based remote monitoring capabilities, which is identified as a future enhancement in the current work.

3. Robust Real-Time Face Detection

Attribute	Details
Authors	Viola & Jones (2004)
Journal	International Journal of Computer Vision
Method	Haar Cascade algorithm for face and eye detection
Key Finding	Fast and accurate real-time face detection
Limitations	Performance affected by lighting and face angles

Viola and Jones introduced the Haar Cascade algorithm for real-time face detection using a camera, which became a foundational technique for vision-based drowsiness monitoring. While this approach achieved fast and accurate detection, it requires camera hardware and is computationally more demanding than IR- based methods. The current work adopts the simpler and more cost-effective IR sensor approach to avoid these constraints.

4. Real-Time System for Monitoring Driver Vigilance

Attribute	Details
Authors	Bergasa et al. (2006)
Journal	IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems
Method	Eye closure detection and head movement tracking
Key Finding	Improved accuracy using multiple parameters
Limitations	Complex system design and higher cost

Bergasa et al. proposed a multi-parameter vigilance monitoring system combining eye closure detection with head movement tracking using computer vision. The use of multiple indicators improved detection accuracy over single-parameter systems. However, the increased complexity and cost make direct deployment in low-budget vehicles challenging, motivating the simpler sensor-based design adopted in this project.

5. Eye-Tracking for Detection of Driver Fatigue

Attribute	Details
Authors	Eriksson & Papanikolopoulos (1997)
Journal	IEEE Intelligent Transportation Systems
Method	Eye tracking for monitoring eye movement and gaze
Key Finding	Effective detection of fatigue using eye behavior
Limitations	Requires advanced hardware and complex setup

Eriksson and Papanikolopoulos developed one of the early eye-tracking systems for driver fatigue detection, monitoring eye movements and gaze direction to identify drowsiness. While their system demonstrated strong detection capability and served as a foundation for modern vision-based systems, the requirement for expensive hardware and complex calibration limits practical deployment. This gap in accessibility is directly addressed by the cost-effective embedded approach in the present work.

III. Design Methodology

This chapter describes the hardware and software components, system architecture, and working principle of the IoT-based Driver Drowsiness and Alcohol Detection System.

1. Hardware Requirements

- Arduino UNO Microcontroller (ATmega328P, 16 MHz)
- Eye-Blink Sensor (IR-based, KY-032 module)
- MQ-3 Alcohol Sensor (electrochemical, analog output)
- Piezo Buzzer (5V active)
- DC Motor with L298N Motor Driver (H-Bridge)
- LCD Display (I2C interface) for status output
- 12V DC Power Supply (regulated)
- Connecting Wires, Breadboard, and LED Indicator

2. Software Requirements

- Arduino IDE (Integrated Development Environment)
- Embedded C / Arduino Programming Language

3. System Architecture and Working Principle

The system operates through two independent but parallel detection channels. The eye-blink sensor emits infrared light toward the driver's eye. When the eye is open, reflected IR light is received by the sensor. When the eye closes, the reflection pattern changes and the sensor sends a digital signal to the Arduino UNO. If the eyes remain closed beyond the preset threshold of approximately 3 to 5 seconds, the Arduino triggers the buzzer and reduces motor speed to zero.

Simultaneously, the MQ-3 alcohol sensor continuously measures ambient alcohol concentration in the driver's breath. When detected levels exceed 400 ppm, the system triggers the buzzer, reduces motor speed to 30%, and can disable the vehicle ignition relay. Both modules operate independently, ensuring that detection of either condition immediately activates the appropriate safety response without requiring any manual driver input.

4. Block Diagram

Figure 1 shows the system block diagram illustrating the connections between input sensors, the Arduino UNO processing unit, and output actuators including the buzzer, motor driver, LCD display, and LED indicator.

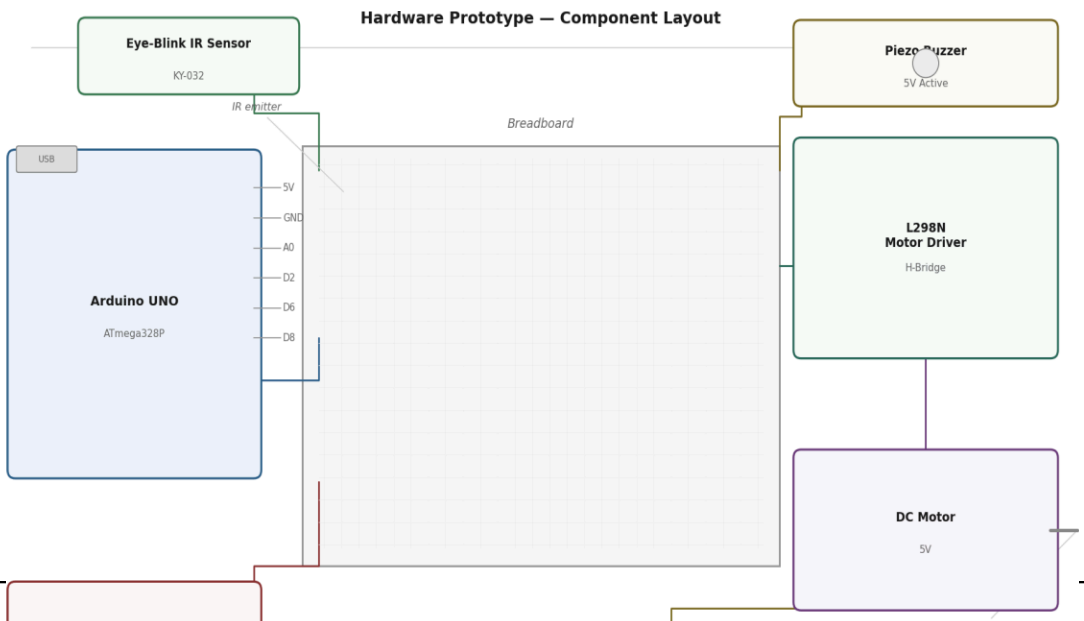

Figure 1: System Hardware Prototype – Component Layout

5. System Flowchart

The system flowchart (Figure 2) describes the complete operational logic. The Arduino initializes and loads calibration data, then continuously reads both sensors. If eye closure exceeds 3 seconds, a drowsiness alert is triggered. If alcohol concentration exceeds 400 ppm, an alcohol alert is triggered. In both cases, an emergency alert is issued and the system waits for manual reset if conditions remain abnormal.

6. Circuit Design

The eye-blink sensor connects its digital output (DO) to Arduino pin D2, with VCC and GND from the 5V rail. The MQ-3 sensor connects its analog output (AO) to Arduino pin A0. The buzzer connects to pin D8. The L298N motor driver receives PWM signals from pins D6 and D9 for speed control. The 12V supply powers both the Arduino and the motor driver.

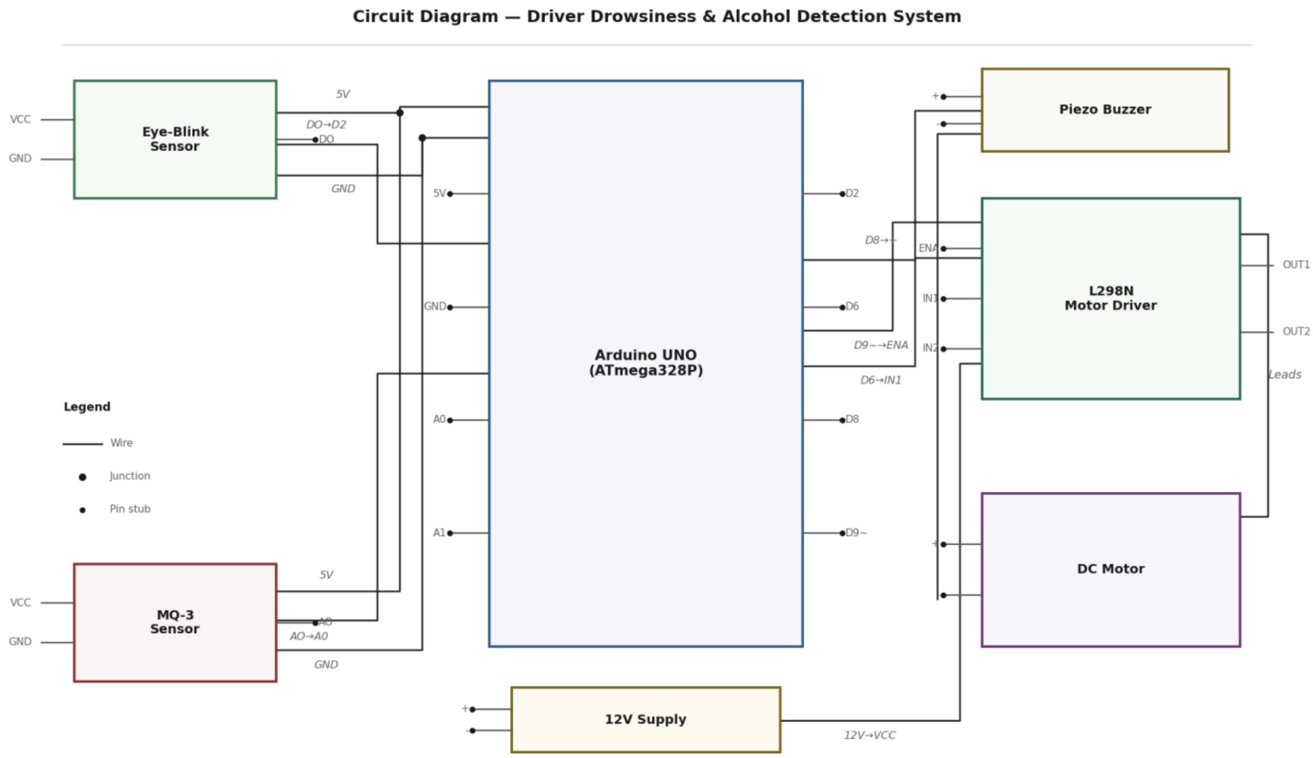

Figure 2 : Circuit Diagram

IV. Results and Discussions

The Driver Drowsiness and Alcohol Detection System was successfully implemented and tested under various conditions. The eye-blink sensor accurately detected prolonged eye closure and triggered the buzzer alert within the specified time threshold. The motor speed reduction mechanism activated as intended, demonstrating the system's capability to respond autonomously to unsafe driving conditions.

1. Test Results

Test Condition	Expected Output	Observed Output
Eyes closed > 3 seconds	Buzzer ON, Motor Stop	Buzzer ON, Motor Stop
Eyes open (normal)	No alert	No alert
Alcohol > 400 ppm	Buzzer ON, Speed 30%	Buzzer ON, Speed 30%
Alcohol within limit	No alert	No alert
Both conditions simultaneously	Buzzer ON, Ignition OFF	Buzzer ON, Ignition OFF

Table 1: Test Results Summary

2. Drowsiness Detection Output

Figure 2 shows the Serial Monitor output and system status dashboard during a test where eye closure exceeded the 3-second threshold. The system correctly identified the DROWSINESS ALERT condition, activated the buzzer, and reported the status parameters on the output interface.

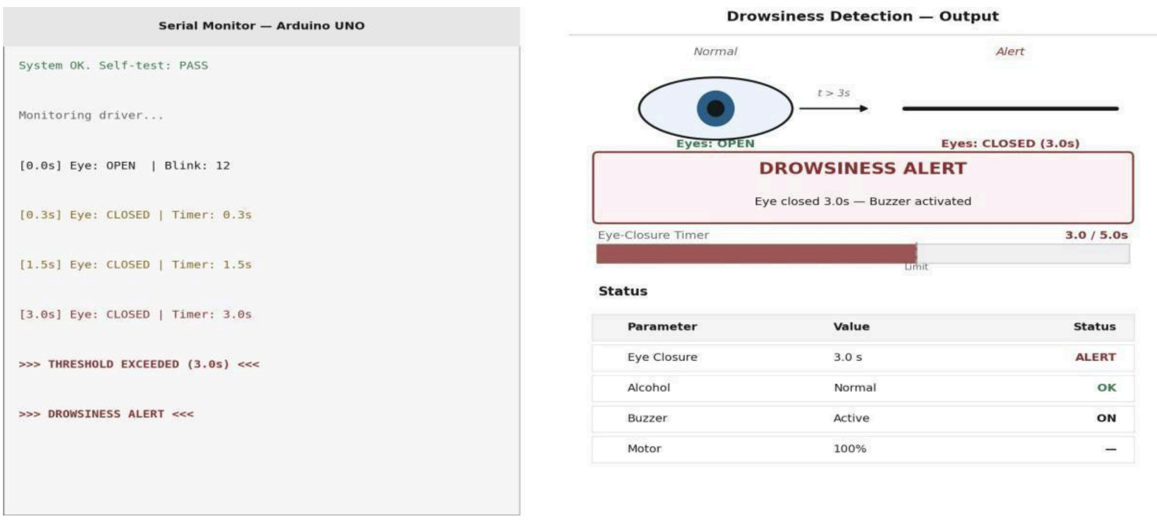

Figure 3: Drowsiness Detection Output – Serial Monitor and Status Dashboard

3. Hardware Testing

Figure 3 shows the physical hardware prototype during testing of the IR sensor module, demonstrating the integration of the eye-blink sensor, Arduino UNO, motor driver, and power supply on the breadboard assembly.

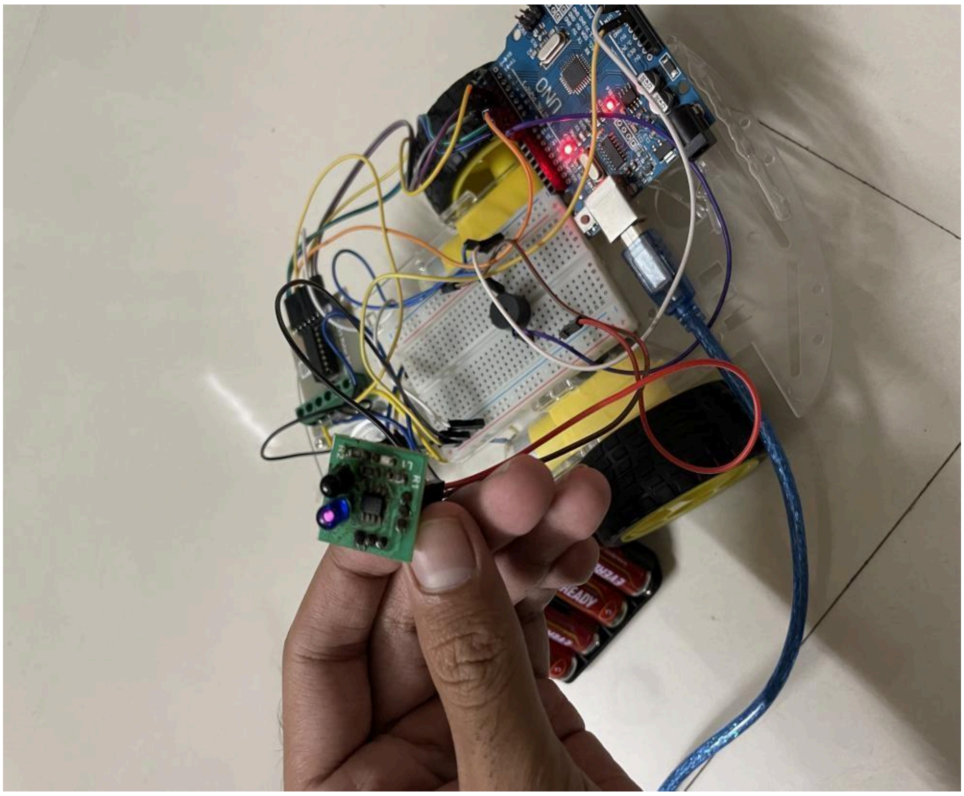

Figure 4: Testing the IR Sensor Module on the Arduino-Based Prototype

Figure 4 shows the complete assembled hardware prototype with all components connected, including the Arduino UNO, L298N motor driver, DC motor, MQ-3 sensor, and the eye-blink sensor module.

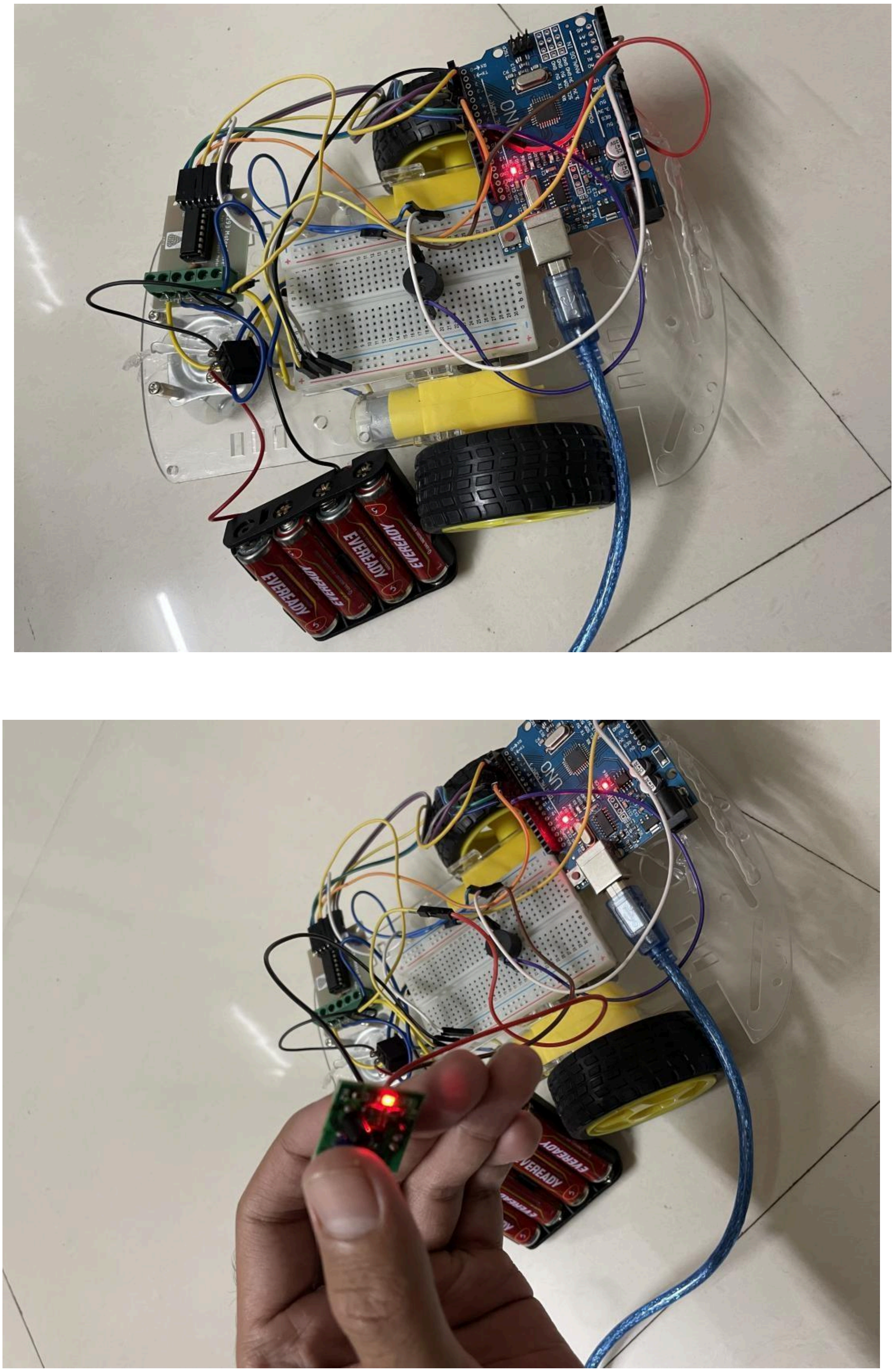

Figure 5: Complete Hardware Assembly – Arduino and All Components

4. Discussion

The test results confirm that the system performs accurately under controlled conditions. The eye-blink sensor consistently detected eye closure events with minimal false positives under stable indoor lighting. The MQ-3 sensor demonstrated reliable threshold-based alcohol detection. Both detection modules operated independently without interfering with each other, validating the parallel processing architecture.

Performance limitations were observed under direct sunlight and in environments with highly reflective surfaces, which occasionally affected the IR sensor sensitivity. The threshold value of 3 seconds was found to be optimal for drowsiness detection, balancing between natural blinking behavior (200–400 ms) and actual drowsy closure patterns. These results are consistent with findings reported in related literature.

V. Conclusions

This paper presented an IoT-based Driver Drowsiness and Alcohol Detection System developed using an Arduino UNO microcontroller, IR eye-blink sensor, and MQ-3 alcohol sensor. The system successfully demonstrated real-time detection capability with immediate automated safety responses including buzzer alerts and motor speed control. Testing confirmed accurate detection under normal operating conditions, with both sensor modules functioning independently and in parallel.

The system offers a practical, low-cost, and non-intrusive solution for improving road safety. It can be readily integrated into various vehicle types including cars, buses, and commercial trucks. Compared to camera-based approaches reviewed in the literature, the sensor-based design reduces hardware complexity and power consumption while maintaining reliable detection capability.

Future enhancements identified for this system include integration of real-time IoT cloud monitoring and GPS-based location tracking for fleet management applications. Replacing the basic IR sensor with a camera-based Eye Aspect Ratio (EAR) algorithm using computer vision would improve detection accuracy and reduce environmental sensitivity. The addition of machine learning models could enable adaptive threshold calibration based on individual driver behavior profiles. Integration with mobile applications for real-time alerts to emergency contacts and transport management systems represents another promising direction.

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