



Did you know?

Road traffic injury is the leading cause of death among children and young

adults aged 5–29 years worldwide ([WHO, 2026](#)). Every year, approximately **1.19 million people** lose their lives on the world's roads. **92% of deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries**. More than half of those killed are pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists, while road crashes cost countries an estimated **3% of GDP annually**.

The WHO South-East Asia Region recorded an estimated **330,222 road traffic deaths in 2021**—nearly **28% of all road deaths globally**. Despite years of effort, the region achieved only a **2% reduction in road traffic deaths between 2010 and 2021**, far short of the global target to halve deaths by 2030 ([WHO, 2024](#)).

Road crashes are often described as accidents. However, WHO's Safe System Approach starts from a different premise. Deaths and serious injuries are preventable. Safer roads depend not only on infrastructure, but also on coordination among local governments, health authorities, transport agencies, police, schools, and communities. Road safety is a governance matter.

Healthy Cities and Road Safety

WHO Regional Healthy Cities Network for South-East Asia encourages cities to address health through governance, planning, and cross-sector collaboration. Road safety is a clear example. National policies in most countries provide significant directions for road safety. Nevertheless, implementation of policies and the decisions

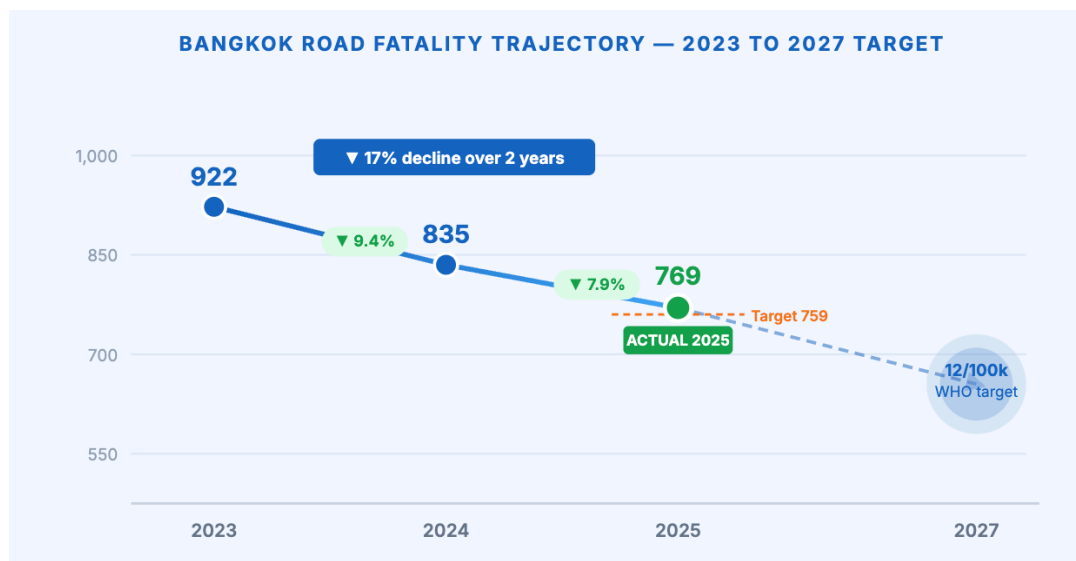
that determine where and how people can walk, cycle, and travel safely are made at local levels.

This month, we spotlight two members of the Network—**Bangkok, Thailand** and **Chandragiri, Nepal**—that are turning safer streets into healthier communities.

Case Study: Bangkok, Thailand

As with most cosmopolitan cities, Bangkok city has been built and expanded to accommodate increasing numbers of vehicles and transportation systems. Bangkok city has **12 million registered cars and motorbikes** that share the streets with 8.4 million residents. Additional commuters and vehicles add to the streets on a daily basis. To improve road safety, Bangkok Metropolitan came up with a most radical idea: **to give the space back to people on foot** ([Cities4Health, n.d.](#)).

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's (BMA) Road Safety Center records that the trend of road death is now declining. 922 road deaths in 2023 (16.99 per 100,000) reduced to 835 in 2024 and 769 in 2025 with a cumulative decline of roughly 17% over two years. The reduction is nearly meeting the 2025 target of 759 ([Thai RSC, 2026](#)). Bangkok's trajectory is contributing to **Thailand's national goal of 12 road deaths per 100,000 by 2027** (Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, 2026). In 2025, injuries stood at 158,294; motorcycles accounted for 92.89% of all vehicle-type casualties. The victims of road traffic deaths are male 25–60 age groups who often use motorcycles. ([Thai RSC, 2026](#)).



2023 to targeted 2027 Bangkok road fatality trajectory.

BMA coordinates road safety through a central Road Safety Center working across policies, law enforcement and education simultaneously. The center connects with the Metropolitan Police Bureau, the Traffic and Transport Department, all 50 district administration offices, and civil-society partners to coordinate the efforts.

Its most visible intervention is demonstrated at the historic **Bamrung Mueang** neighbourhood of Phra Nakhon district, where the BMA worked with the [Thailand Walking and Cycling Institute Foundation](#) and the [Partnership for Healthy Cities](#). A resident survey found that approximately 30% of people commute daily within one kilometre or less. However, people avoided walking because streets felt unsafe ([Bangkok Post, 2024](#)). The local government team widened sidewalks by 48%, installed bollards, added restriped crossings, and traffic-calming measures. Completed in March 2024, the redesign increased pedestrian numbers and reduced vehicle speeds. Cyclist numbers also increased even though the project did not target cycling. Sense of safety has increased, resulting in more significant usage of safe pedestrian walk-ways and roads. ([Cities4Health, n.d.](#)).



At the Si Kak Sao Ching Cha Intersection new street updates, such as lane markings and updated crosswalk placements, are improving pedestrian safety. Source: Cities4Health

This pilot project is being **scaled up to a citywide network**. In 2025, BMA passed its **1,000 km footpath target**, rebuilding more than 1,100 km across **99 roads and around 35 rail stations under “good travel” policy** because 58.2% of Bangkok residents walk to reach mass transit systems versus 31.2% who rely on private vehicles ([The Nation, 2025](#)).

Bangkok's gains came not from one landmark project but from an institution that makes police, planners, districts and residents pull together. Success also stemmed from treating the footpath as part of transport infrastructure and connecting systems. **The Governance system builds Safer Streets.**



Bangkok rebuilt the footpath. Source: [Thairath](#)

Case Study: Chandragiri, Nepal

Nepal recorded an estimated **8,479 road traffic deaths in 2021**, equivalent to **28.2 deaths per 100,000 population**, among the highest rates in the WHO South-East Asia Region. ([WHO, 2024](#))

Located at the western gateway to Kathmandu Valley, Chandragiri Municipality sits along one of Nepal's busiest transport corridors. Under its Healthy City Initiative, the municipality is embedding road safety into city governance rather than treating it as a stand-alone campaign.

A major milestone came on **12 May 2026**, when the Municipal Executive Committee approved the **Healthy City Program Operation and Management Procedure, 2083**. Once published in the Municipal Gazette, the procedure will provide a formal framework for implementing and sustaining Healthy City activities.

At the same time, Chandragiri is finalizing a **Road Traffic Accident Reduction Action Plan** and completed surveys for traffic signals and pelican crossings along the busy Kalanki–Nagdhunga corridor. The municipality partners with the police on CCTV surveillance and have already installed approximately **400 cameras**, strengthening security, traffic management and surveillance across key areas of the municipality.



Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Chandragiri Municipality and Kathmandu Valley Police Office on the installation of CCTV cameras. Source: Chandragiri Municipality

One of Chandragiri's most visible recent actions has been a **vehicle emission testing campaign** conducted with the Department of Environment and Traffic Police. During the first round of testing on **26 May 2026**, approximately **45% of vehicles failed to meet emission standards**. Following enforcement and maintenance requirements, the **failure rate dropped to 22.8%** during the second round conducted on **2 June 2026**.

While designed primarily to improve air quality, the campaign demonstrates **how coordinated enforcement and inter-agency collaboration** can quickly influence compliance and behaviour. Recognising that road safety requires a comprehensive approach, a pedestrian overpass has also been newly built at Naikap Chowk to improve pedestrian safety along the Kalanki-Nagdhunga corridor.



Opening ceremony for the pedestrian overpass at Naikap Chowk Source: Chandragiri Municipality

The strength of the municipality's efforts is underpinned by multi-stakeholder engagement and the adoption of a participatory approach. Chandragiri's experience shows that safer roads often begin not with major infrastructure projects, but with policies, partnerships, and institutions that **make safety a permanent part of local governance**.



Stakeholder engagement workshop on Road Traffic Accident Reduction in Chandragiri Municipality. Source: Chandragiri Municipality

Shared Lessons

Despite their different contexts, Bangkok and Chandragiri highlight several common lessons for cities seeking to improve road safety:

1. **Road safety starts with governance.** Both cities demonstrate that lasting progress depends on coordination across sectors, from local governments and transport authorities to police, health services, and communities
2. **Data should guide action.** Whether tracking road fatalities, identifying high-risk corridors, or monitoring compliance, evidence helps cities target interventions where they are needed most.
3. **Small changes can make a big difference.** Safer crossings, improved footpaths, traffic calming measures, and stronger enforcement can quickly improve safety and influence behaviour.
4. **Partnerships matter.** Collaboration between government agencies, civil society, and community stakeholders helps turn road safety from a single project into a sustained citywide effort.
5. **Road deaths are preventable.** The experiences of Bangkok and Chandragiri reinforce the WHO Safe System Approach: safer roads are not a matter of chance, but the result of deliberate choices and collective action.

The WHO Safe System Approach holds that road deaths are not inevitable. Bangkok and Chandragiri, in different ways, are proving it.

Editor's Pick



Streets for People—Are We Getting it Right?

Car-free streets promise cleaner air, healthier communities, and climate resilience—but are they benefiting everyone? This article explores four critical lessons on equity, heat, accessibility, and safety, showing how cities can create people-first streets without leaving communities behind.

[Read more](#)

Stay tuned for more inspiring stories from our healthy cities network in our next update!

Share with us your city's best practices!

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WHO South-East Asia office and Regional Laboratory on Urban Governance for Health and Well-being are pleased to invite you to join South-East Asia Region Healthy Cities Network.

More information and details [here](#)

Recommended Resources

Selected resources supporting this issue's theme

[Promoting walking and cycling: a toolkit of policy options](#)

[WHO South-East Asia Regional status report on road safety: Towards safer and sustainable mobility](#)

Further Reading & References

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