

Thailand tops road death ranking list

Thailand overtakes Libya on road death rankings

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The road death rate in Thailand makes the country surpass other deadliest countries. (Photo by Chanat Katanyu)

Thailand now tops the rankings as the country with the highest death rate in road accidents, according to one global survey.

Despite government attempts to reduce the number of casualties, a seminar on road safety was told on Monday that Thailand now tops the road death list on the World Atlas website.

"The road death rate in Thailand is a matter of extreme concern as the country now ranks first, surpassing the deadliest country in the last survey, Libya," Thaejing Siripanit, secretary-general of the Don't Drive Drunk Foundation, told the seminar.

He was referring to rankings published in November by the website which gives appraisals on various topics, among them road safety.

World Atlas, which provides online information on travel, society, economics and environment, ranked 30 countries around the world.

Thailand's estimated road traffic death rate (per 100,000 population) stands at 36.2 this year, followed by Malawi (35) and Liberia (33.7).

African countries filled most top-10 slots.

The World Health Organisation, meanwhile, ranks Thailand as the second deadliest country, behind Libya from a survey of 180 countries.

The World Atlas ranking matches death cases in road accidents compiled by the foundation. Last year, up to 22,000 people, or an average of 50 to 60 people a day, died in car crashes, said Dr Thaejing.

A few suggestions to boost road safety were proposed at the seminar. Among them was promoting the use of dashboard video cameras, or "dash cams" in the hope footage of bad driving posted online will deter motorists from driving illegally and unsafely.

Dr Thaejing suggested the government make installing dash cams a priority, believing it will go well with its much-touted Thailand 4.0 policy, which promotes technological advances to improve public services.

The cameras will record all events happening in front of cars. This will make motorists think twice before committing mistakes, he said.

Dr Thaejing said video clips going viral on social media can be a tough punishment. Wrongdoers could face heavy criticism and even lose their jobs.

His foundation wants dash cams fitted in at least 80% of cars.

He said he once proposed the policy to Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, who expressed enthusiasm for the idea.

However, since Gen Prayut instructed officials to work on a policy plan in May last year, there has been little progress, Dr Thaejing said.

Dr Thaejing questioned the enforcement of laws that have been in effect for many years but which have failed to curb dangerous driving, mainly by drunk drivers. Many Thais are "well aware of the laws but simply ignore them," he said.