

## GERMANY



### Town Ditches Traffic Lights to Cut Crashes

A town council in Germany has decided the best way of improving road safety is to remove all traffic lights and stop signs downtown. Bohmte is trying to reduce accidents and make life easier for pedestrians in an area used by 13,500 cars every day. Drivers and pedestrians will enjoy equal right of way. Said Klaus Goedejohann, the town's mayor, "Traffic will no longer be dominant."

The idea of removing signs to improve road safety, called "Shared Space," was developed by Dutch traffic specialist Hans Monderman and is supported by the European Union. The EU will cover half of the \$1.7 million it will cost Bohmte to ditch its traffic lights. Monderman's ideas have already been implemented in the town of Drachten in the north of the Netherlands, where all stop lights, traffic signs, pavements and street markings have been removed. "It's been very successful there," Goedejohann said, adding that accidents in Drachten had been reduced significantly. Officials in Fuerstenberg/Havel,

a small town north of Berlin, are also considering adopting the "Shared Space" scheme.

*reuters.com*

## CHINA



### New Subway Eases Beijing Travel Misery

A major new subway line in Beijing opened this fall as part of China's bid to transform the city into a world-class capital prior to the Olympics and ease the misery of its long-suffering commuters. The 16-mile service is aimed at improving Beijing's poor air quality and reducing traffic jams caused by the spiraling number of cars on the city's streets.

More government money is being ploughed underground, with another three subway lines to be added to the network by the middle of next year, just in time for the Olympic opening ceremony on August 8. Light-rail will also connect downtown Beijing to the city's revamped and expanded airport, with that service slated to begin in June 2008.

Officials believe a better public transport network will persuade more Beijingers to abandon their cars. There are already well over three million cars in Beijing, and that number is growing by more than 1,000 a day.

*afp.com*

## UNITED KINGDOM



### Bobbies on Bicycles are Banned - Just in Case They Fall Off

A police force has banned hundreds of its officers from riding bicycles for safety reasons. Greater Manchester Police has stopped 300 fully-fledged officers from patrolling on their mountain bikes. The patrols are popular with the public because they allow officers to chase criminals down narrow lanes and through parks and because they act as a visible deterrent. But police chiefs say they fear the officers do not have enough training to handle road conditions across Greater Manchester.

The edict follows the death of a 21-year-old cycling PCSO who was hit by a truck earlier this month. Member of Parliament Philip Davies said: "Now they are making loony policies like pulling 300 bike patrol officers off the streets in case they fall off and hurt themselves."

Some 300 officers who have less than a year's bicycle patrol experience must walk or use cars for two months pending a safety review. Officers with more than a year's experience can continue to use mountain bikes, but they will be given extra safety advice.

*dailymail.co.uk*

## THAILAND



### Car-Free Day in Thailand to Save Energy, Cut Pollution

Over 1,200 bicyclists joined in festivities organized by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) as part of its cam-

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