

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	19/7/2013

PRIME NEWS

# Najib fulfils pledge to taxi drivers

NST - 19/7/2013

**BETTER IMAGE:** 1,000 individual taxi permit holders get RM5,000 each to buy Proton Exora taxis

**ZULITA MUSTAFA  
AND NURADILLA NOORAZAM**  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday fulfilled his promise to help some 1,000 recipients of individual taxi permits by granting them RM5,000 each to buy the Proton Exora.

He said the aid would be channelled through Yayasan Rakyat 1Malaysia soon.

"This is one more of the promises fulfilled by the government to ensure that taxi drivers can use a suitable vehicle for the convenience and comfort of passengers," Najib said before distributing individual taxi permits to 500 taxi drivers at the Land Public Transport Commission's (SPAD) headquarters at KL Sentral here.

He said those who received the individual permits were obliged to buy the vehicle for use as their taxis, in the effort to boost the image of the nation's taxi-service industry.

The grant will include the price of the car, which excludes Customs duties and sales tax.

A down payment is also not required of the taxi drivers.

"We will also provide comprehensive vehicle insurance and a personal coverage for one year."

The taxi drivers can also apply to Bank Simpanan Nasional for a loan to purchase the car at an annual interest rate of two per cent.

Najib said the new taxis were expected to be seen on roads in



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, accompanied by SPAD chairman Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar (second from right), giving out taxi permits to taxi drivers in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Azmaidi Abidin

Penang, Johor Baru and here in September.

Out of 1,000 individual licences handed out to taxi drivers, 141 of them went to female drivers.

Najib also announced that SPAD would be reviewing taxi fares in an effort to increase the living standards of taxi drivers and improve

the quality of service.

He said the review was necessary in view of the increase in operational costs that taxi drivers had to bear.

"We are hoping to create a new model for the taxi service industry. We cannot rely on the old model.

"The transformation of the ser-

vice industry is necessary to increase the socio-economic level and welfare of taxi drivers."

At the event, Najib launched the new TEKSIM (Teksi 1Malaysia) Proton Exora model on the road and presented a replica key to five taxi drivers.

SPAD chairman Tan Sri Syed

Hamid Albar said it was planning to allow taxi drivers to charge higher fares as early as next year.

Syed Hamid said the agency was in the midst of completing its study on the charging of higher fares for a better quality of service.

He said SPAD would engage with the public on the mechanism to increase fares before submitting its plan to the government.

"We will get their input first, as we want to know how they feel about it.

"Our team will hold open discussions (on the matter) and welcome the public to connect with us and give feedback through social media and emails.

"The process will take time and if the government agrees with our suggestion, we will then proceed with the plan by early next year."

The last time there was a rise in fares in the public transportation system was in 2009.

Syed Hamid said apart from the opportunity to own new cars, taxi drivers would also go through an accreditation course to improve their ethics and professionalism.

"What we are aiming for is a new breed of highly professional and friendly taxi drivers who can earn money for themselves, while maintaining the country's good image to tourists.

"The prime minister has said the taxi industry should be 'pleasant', not just in its exterior, but also in the quality of taxi drivers."

He said the country was expecting more than 30 million tourists next year for "Visit Malaysia Year 2014".