

What now, ride-sharers?

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Tiger is surprised that, despite having their vehicles already impounded, drivers for ride-sharing applications are still required to service their vehicle loans! But call Tiger curious. What are the companies doing to help the drivers caught in this way?

To say that Tiger is surprised is an understatement. Then again, disappointment comes rather close. On the other hand, there is also bafflement. But really, what Tiger wants to know is whether or not the owners of private vehicles should be required to continue servicing their car loans after their vehicles had been impounded by the Land Public Transport Commission (Spad).

Of course, according to the report in The Sun, these owners, whose vehicles had been impounded over the past 11 months for either being a driver under the banner of a ride-sharing application like Uber, GrabCar, or Blacklane, or for providing illegal taxi services, are still being hounded by their respective banks to repay their loans.

While there is some degree of punishment that can be meted out to those that Spad has slapped with the title “kereta sapu”, Tiger says, let the punishment fit the crime. On top of impounding the vehicles, which Spad is going to resell, as well as the fine and/or jail term that will be placed upon the shoulders of the driver, now the drivers are saddled with the payments of the car loans, or face those punishments as well?

Wow. Just wow. As far as Tiger knows, Malaysia, via Spad, is the first country that has actually impounded vehicles operating under the banner of ride-sharing apps. While, hey, this is a new first for Malaysia in terms of taking action, this also appears to be a first for Uber, who, as Tiger sees it, has no idea of how to deal with the situation.

So far, all Tiger has seen or heard as a reaction is a statement reiterating their 100% support for their drivers (Uber), and what appears to be total silence (GrabCar and Blacklane).

Hey, didn't Uber and GrabCar kind of promise that they were there to enrich the lives of their driver-partners? Was all that a gimmick to attract drivers to your banners?

Now what? Is the next course of action to twiddle your collective thumbs and do nothing while your driver partners, who have had their vehicles impounded due to driving under your banners, are hounded by the banks?

Yet, there is also the matter of mixed messages. While, on the one hand, Spad is running all these sting operations and who knows what to catch drivers for ride-sharing apps, other government agencies are promoting the use of these applications! One particular event held by a particular ministry of Malaysia (Tiger is not saying which) is offering a discount of RM15 to members of the media who use GrabCar to get to its event!

Clearly, this is a case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing, despite the headlines running in newspapers and other media sources that have Spad proclaiming that such services are illegal.

So what gives?

Clearly, the Malaysian government needs to make up its mind regarding these services, and not endorsing them in the midst of denouncing them.

At the same time, Spad's actions against the drivers, while of course perfectly legal and within its rights to impound vehicles as the authority in charge of public land transportation, should also be revised.

Again, let the punishment fit the crime. It is absolutely unfair to the owners of the vehicles impounded that they still have to service their vehicle loans when they no longer have the vehicles for the purpose of ride-sharing.

In other words, the drivers are simply caught in the middle between the authorities and the ride-sharing companies as collateral damage.

If Tiger is not mistaken, those drivers whose vehicles were destroyed during protests against ride-sharing by angry taxi drivers in other countries were at least able to claim some form of recompense.

However, the drivers of the impounded vehicles do not even get that much, they are instead saddled with more woes.

Somehow, the way all of this is going down is putting a grimace on Tiger's visage. Tiger still feels that the whole situation could have been handled better, but as it is now, Tiger thinks the most important thing is to look into this immediately.

It's not like the proceeds from the sale of the impounded vehicles will be paid to the banks, now is it? Where would it leave those drivers/owners then? For those who say it serves them right, please remember, they are trying to provide for themselves and their families too.

GRRRRR!!!

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