

New app to boost taxi service in May

SUPPORT: Embrace technology to be competitive, local taxi firms told

THE Transport Ministry will assist taxi associations in developing apps to spur the public transportation industry's growth.

Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Aziz Kaprawi said the move aimed to open up the market by encouraging healthy competition among taxi companies, while avoiding monopolisation of the market.

This, he said, would equip taxi companies with the technology to remain competitive in a market revolutionised by mobile app-based services, such as Uber and GrabCar.

"We have met taxi associations and discussions are focused on this objective. We want to establish a competitive market, which will benefit consumers.

"The government will support this and we will discuss further on whether this should include funding the development of these apps.

What is clear is that we need to embrace technology. "In this day and age, if we deny technology, we will be left behind.

So, we: encourage taxi companies to develop their apps and take advantage of technology to improve their services." He said the first such app would be launched next month.

"We shouldn't go against what the consumers want. They want services that are more accessible and easier, which is what services such as Uber and GrabCar offer, Taxi companies should make their services appeal in the same way.

"By doing so, through apps, we can expect to see more consistency in pricing and this will benefit consumers," he said.

He was speaking after delivering a keynote address at the Maritime Institute of Malaysia International Conference on the Straits of Malacca. Aziz added that the government would also be looking into regulating Uber and GrabCar service providers, by requiring them to be licensed.

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