

## For the greater good

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**PETALING JAYA:** The Transport Ministry's main priority in its decision to regulate e-hailing services is to ensure customer satisfaction, said its minister Anthony Loke.

However, he said the government also wanted to make it fair for all parties so all public passenger service providers could work harmoniously together.

"In addition, the government is legalising e-hailing services to ensure its drivers can operate without being harassed," he said in a phone interview with theSun yesterday.

Loke was responding to reports that some e-hailing drivers had threatened to quit over the move to regulate them.

"All these complaints are simply premature. Nobody knows how many drivers will stay and how many will opt out," Loke said.

He maintained his stand that requiring e-hailing drivers to obtain a public service vehicle (PSV) licence was essential.

Since the government announced the PSV requirement, e-hailing companies have claimed that more than a dozen drivers have asked for their accounts to be closed.

Loke said those behind the claims wanted to pressure the government to back down, "but we are not falling into that trap".

"There are people who do not want any regulations and we can never convince them otherwise. But that is something the government can accept."

On claims that the PSV licence would incur additional costs for e-hailing drivers, Loke said there were no rules in the first place.

"Before this, anyone could pick up passengers. We can't go on like this. We are talking about a public service. We are just putting in place regulations that will make it simple for everyone."

"We can't say there will be a reduction in the number of drivers after July (when the PSV rule is enforced). We are encouraging taxi drivers to adopt the e-hailing system and a lot of initiative and effort have gone into this," he said when commenting on the possibility of taxi touts taking advantage of commuters.

Loke pointed out that the decision to require e-hailing drivers to get a PSV licence was made in July last year together with other new rules to regulate e-hailing services.

"It's not like they didn't know. Why are they suddenly not happy with it now?"

Other requirements announced then were for e-hailing vehicles to be sent for annual vehicle inspection at Puspakom, and drivers would also have to pass criminal background and medical checks.

The cars used would also need to have a minimum three-star Asean NCAP rating (most local cars are rated four stars and above), and cars over three years old must be inspected at Puspakom at a fee of RM55.

On another matter, Loke said the federal government had not received any official application from the Selangor government to rename KL International Airport as Sepang International Airport.

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