

Take a selfie and book a ride

PETALING JAYA: In a bid to enhance safety for its drivers, Grab Malaysia is implementing facial recognition technology into its app. The facial recognition technology, which is now an essential component of the e-hailing operator's Passenger Verification feature, was unveiled yesterday by Grab in collaboration with the Transport Ministry.

First-time users are now required to take a selfie of themselves using the Grab app before booking their first ride. Praising Grab's initiative, Transport Minister Anthony Loke said it was keen to work with the private sector in exploring new technologies to enhance road safety for Malaysians.

Grab Malaysia country head Sean Goh said through the facial recognition technology, drivers' safety would be assured and passengers' privacy be protected.

"Their selfie will only be used for one-time verification purposes and it will not be shown to drivers," he said, adding that their personal data were protected under the Personal Data Protection Act.

Grab, he said, hoped the technology would help reduce crimes committed by passengers, which was a concern among many e-hailing drivers. "Our experience was that those looking to engage in criminal activities would do so within their first four times of using the Grab app once they sign up," he said.

On another matter, Loke said disabled drivers would be able to apply for the Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence from May, so that they could continue working after the July 12 ruling requiring e-hailing drivers to have a PSV licence.

"Existing regulations do not allow these drivers to apply for a PSV licence, but as a minister, I am prepared to look at it. "I feel that if the disabled can be independent as drivers and earn a living for themselves, why should we stop that? "We are talking about 300 to 400 such drivers and they will be given priority in terms of going for PSV courses," he added.

On complaints that applying for the PSV licence was inconvenient for part-time drivers, Loke hoped everyone would cooperate with the ruling as it would help create a level playing field for e-hailing and taxi drivers in the country.

"The long term benefit is that the industry will be legalised and regulated, so you have a more secure environment to work in. "We don't want this industry to be continuously in a dispute with traditional taxi drivers," he said, adding that the ministry would not extend the July 12 deadline.

SOURCE: THE STAR | PAGE : 8 | 12 APRIL 2019