

CALL TO ENACT LAW TO BETTER MONITOR, PROTECT E-HAILING COMMUNITY

KUALA LUMPUR : E-hailing groups want the next federal government to establish special legislation to protect and ensure a better future for the community.

Malaysian eHailing Alliances chief activist Jose Rizal said a law of this nature would bring together relevant ministries to better monitor and manage the industry.

He said that up to February last year, gig economy workers made up 26 per cent of the country's labour force.

He acknowledged that there have been improvements made over the years, with gig workers now able to contribute to the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) under the i-Saraan initiative as self-employed workers, as well as the Self-Employment Social Security Scheme under Socso (PERKESO).

"However, we do not have an Act yet to manage gig workers. This would require a collaboration among entities such as the Transport Ministry, Human Resources Ministry and Communications and Multimedia Ministry. They will need to manage aspects such as technology, (registration of) vehicles and overall welfare of the self-employed," Jose told the *New Straits Times*.

He also called for an amendment to the Land Public Transport Act 2010 to make it easier for people to join the e-hailing industry.

"Right now, people need to apply for a public service vehicle licence, an e-hailing vehicle permit, e-hailing insurance and vehicle inspection fee, which could cost them thousands of ringgit. We hope some of the fees can be made more affordable for those hoping to enter the industry."

He also touched on the need for upskilling and reskilling efforts to ensure that gig workers could transition to other careers.

"Helping them achieve this can increase their employability."

Jose also urged the Land Public Transport Agency (APAD) to set up a system to minimise bureaucracy in the e-hailing vehicle permit application process.

He said at the moment, prospective drivers had to apply via the operators they plan to join, such as Grab, AirAsia Ride and MyCar.

The approval duration, he said, was subject to the ability of the operators, which could be improved upon if APAD had a central system for the purpose.

"They (APAD) had promised to launch the system this year, but until now, there has been no news. APAD is still doing this manually. A proper system would reduce bureaucracy and save time."

Jose said the system, once set up, should also be synchronised with the Road Transport Department (RTD).

"At the moment, RTD is supervising the industry under MySikap. Once APAD has its own system, the two systems should be integrated to better monitor e-hailing operators, drivers and vehicles."

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