

## GLOBAL NEWS



### SWAP TO CNG - OR LOSE YOUR TAXI!

In the city of the Taj Mahal, pollution levels are high and so an order was made by the local District Administration there to run auto rickshaws and taxis on compressed natural gas (CNG) instead of petrol or diesel. Police have begun impounding auto rickshaws and taxis which have not swapped over.

Senior Superintendent of Police Hari Ram Sharma told Taxi Globe that dozens of auto rickshaw drivers who say they think the ban was hastily imposed without making provisions for enough CNG outlets.

### GREEN APPLES FOR THE BIG APPLE

Over in New York, The Taxi and Limousine Commission has been trialling a lithium battery-powered PT Cruiser cab to see how well suited the vehicle is to the work of a New York taxi. But the vehicle did not withstand the cold temperatures during the pilot scheme earlier this year. "It got to spend a lot of time on the back of a flatbed tow truck and not a lot of time as a taxicab," said Commission spokesman Allan Fromberg.

The Commission and Mayor Michael Bloomberg are committed to make taxis more environmentally friendly. Earlier this year they announced that the entire yellow cab fleet will go hybrid by 2012. A green-apple sticker has been unveiled to mark the growing hybrid fleet. There are now more than 46 of the hybrid taxis on the road, out of a total fleet of over 13,000. Plans are also underway to put a sticker on cabs which are wheelchair accessible.

### BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CANADIAN PASSENGERS?

Taxi Globe has heard that Vancouver cab drivers in Canada may come to rue the times they have snubbed the province's transportation minister, Kevin Falcon. He is now proposing a passenger bill of rights to hold cabbies to account when they refuse fares, provide poor service or reject credit cards demanding payment in cash only.

The reason is partly because he has been refused cab service several times, but primarily because of the number of young women who he claims have told him about their problems trying to get Vancouver cabbies to take them home to the suburbs, especially on weekends. "I'm really troubled by the fact that people who are trying to do the right thing by being responsible by not driving after drinking, are not having cab drivers cooperate and do what they are legally obligated to do - and that's drive them home."

He said the problem of Vancouver taxi drivers refusing to take passengers

where they wanted to go couldn't be left to the taxi industry to resolve. "Our taxi industry has an obligation to serve the public and that means they serve the public. They don't get to serve their own interests of when it is convenient to them! I really am frustrated by that attitude."

Mr Falcon recalled how he was once refused service by a cab waiting at a city hotel at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. "He asked where I was going and I told him where my home was. He just said that he didn't want to go that way and drove off! On other occasions, I've been told they were due for a shift change or because my destination was only two or three blocks away."

Mr Falcon said he is proposing a bill of rights that will be posted in every cab with a phone number passengers can call to trigger an investigation by the passenger transportation branch that will result in penalties where warranted.

"Anything short of that is not going to be acceptable, because you have got a broken system and the companies are going to be unable to fix it on their own in my considered view."

He ended by saying that he has told the cab companies how totally dissatisfied he is and has met with both the chairman and director of the passenger transportation branch, which oversees the industry. "I want them to look into what options we have to bring about change and the option I particularly want them to explore is the passenger bill of rights," he said.

### SOUTH AFRICAN MOTORISTS GET CHANCE TO BEAT UP TAXI DRIVERS IN PC GAME!

In what has been described as the ultimate sick game, a South African website has zeroed in on the road rage of South Africans by developing an online game that allows them to beat up the usual targets of their ire - taxi drivers - and smash their vehicle to smithereens!

Players of Taxi Wars can choose from among five weapons - a fist, a paint can, a golf club, a screwdriver and the plastic 'vuvuzela' used to trumpet support at football matches. Players can hammer the driver until he's unconscious, smash his cab windows, burst his tyres and then sign their name to their handiwork with a touch of spray paint.

The title of the game, Taxi Wars, was inspired by the turf wars between South African taxi companies - often reported in Taxi Globe's Global News - and which regularly end in shootouts with the deaths of innocent bystanders. The game was developed by online advertising agency iLogic for [www.play65.co.za](http://www.play65.co.za), a gambling website.



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