

## GLOBAL NEWS



### Touts – But Where?

At a time when the London Assembly's report on touting in the capital is released, another report arrived on Taxi Globe's desk. This one considers that a lack of proper policing is the major factor that has encouraged a huge increase in the number of pirate cabs operating in the city - added to the fact that the cars used were "death traps" with many carrying no insurance. However, the drivers were perceived by some members of the public as providing a cheaper service, when in fact they were more likely to rip the passenger off. Is this London? Well it certainly could be, but that particular newspaper description of touting came from the Tanzanian capital of Dar es Salaam!" The names may change but...

A report by a Tanzanian Sunday paper claims that private cab operators are taking advantage of the loose existing regulations and laws governing the transport sector, while licensed taxi drivers were blaming the licensing authority and the traffic police for being too lax. The report also revealed that relevant authorities were aware of the illegal operations of these pirate cabs and that some of the companies running them were owned by rather unsavoury characters. But the one big difference between Dar es Salaam and London came in a quote from a member of the Taxi Drivers Association, who didn't want to be named. He told Taxi Globe: "The police may nab a pirate cab, but then you find that some big government official calls the police to release the car and driver. Later you hear of the police being beaten up by the drivers because they are driving a car owned by a big shot!"

Hey, maybe London's not so bad after all...!

### Forgot To Take Your Baby? It's The Drivers Fault In Chicago!

Taxi passengers have rallied in support of a Chicago taxi driver who was given a ticket for 'allowing' a couple forget their 3-year-old son in his cab! Chicago police cited the taxi driver when a young couple got out of his cab outside their home following a trip from the airport and left their boy sound asleep in the vehicle's back seat! The boy was found safe when the unnamed driver later returned to O'Hare International Airport.

Police then issued a citation based on a City ordinance requiring cab drivers to make sure the rear of their vehicles were cleared out after dropping off passengers. The driver, a 36 year old from Pakistan who was driving a cab while studying for a medical licence in Chicago, faced a fine of up to \$100. A dispatcher with the driver's radio taxi company told Taxi Globe via the

internet that the situation was utterly ridiculous. "This guy is just trying to make a living, he's not out there looking to make passengers forget their kids!"

The dispatcher added that around 50 people had called the company after reading about the incident in the newspapers to support the driver. "A lot of regular riders are calling and taking the cab driver's side big time. They're saying that the parents should have been more responsible, so why blame the driver? Those calling are of all ages and especially young people with kids, in fact – everybody," said the dispatcher, an ex-cab driver himself.

The parents had been busy unloading baggage from a trip to Los Angeles and were confused over whether the husband or wife had the child. Police said that no action was contemplated against the parents. Then two days after the ticketing and following hundreds of complaints from the public, Chicago City officials dismissed the matter. "Both parties in this case made an honest mistake," a police statement said, "and the only fair thing to do is to withdraw the citation against the driver."

"I'm just so happy that this is over," said the cabby, "and I'll certainly be checking the back of the cab in future. Even so, I just don't see why I should have been put through all this ... in fact," he went on, "I had a lot of attorneys call and say they would pay any fine!"

### Chinese Olympics and Taxis...

All taxi companies and drivers in China's capital of Beijing have been asked to be ready in offering a high quality service to help the city's effort to create a good impression for the many visitors expected to attend this year's Olympic Games. A city official told Taxi Globe that Beijing taxis were safe, comfortable and dependable as well as being able to assist visitors in feeling at home. The director of the Beijing Transportation Bureau explained that they had educated taxi drivers in spoken English, improved monitoring processes, equipped each taxi with at least one kind of English-speaking newspaper as well as introductory tapes that describe the ancient city of Beijing itself.

Over the past few years, Beijing has also built what they described as an efficient taxi dispatching and global positioning system that has replaced the previous voice channels as well as introducing many cabs running on cleaner liquid natural gas. It is hoped that this will help a city famed almost as much for its smog as it is for its fascinating history...

## Taxi Air Conditioning

All makes Serviced and Repaired

Mobile Service - We come to you

**Tel: 020 8715 0079**

Covering London & The Home Counties

