

## GLOBAL NEWS



### Minicab Battle In Costa Rica

On the same day as London's taxi drivers made their way to Trafalgar Square to demonstrate against Westminster's decision to allow a "minicab rank" at Leicester Square, Costa Rica's equivalent group of drivers (fuerza roja) were up in arms against the threat of the porteadores – minicabs, but literally translated to informal taxi drivers! They squared off around the streets of San Jose as taxi drivers called for a day of protest, which, as in London, caused all kinds of traffic jams.

The majority of taxi drivers participated in the paro nacional – or national strike - in an attempt to force legislators into approving a law that has already been drafted and which it is hoped will once and for all solve the problem of the piratas – self translating we think! Although the taxi drivers recognise that the government has supported their efforts to solve the Costa Rican minicab problem by issuing executive orders forcing minicabs to place signs on their vehicles saying they are only to be called by radio and then only with account clients, the taxi drivers still felt there was a lack of enforcement on the part of the CR police.



The taxi driver's union, Foro Nacional de Taxistas, said it could not believe that it should take three years of debate in the legislature and yet still not show a result. To counteract the claims by the taxi drivers, minicabs from all around Costa Rica also descended onto the capital's streets to show their solidarity against the taxis. Authorities feared a clash between taxi drivers and minicabs could escalate into violence and many arrests were made, although no serious injuries were reported.

The government has now said they will attempt to speed the legislation up.

### 13 Deported For Running Minicabs In Dubai...!

What's good enough for London and Costa Rica is obviously good enough for Dubai. At least 13 people have been deported and scores of others slapped with hefty fines for running an 'illegal taxi' service in the holiday

paradise. "We have decided to take stringent measures against illegal taxi operators to ensure safety of passengers and tourists," said Jawad Sajwani, Director of Enforcement at the Public Transport Agency of the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA).

He said the action against illegal taxi operators was taken in collaboration with the Tourist Security Department and the Dubai Police, adding that 13 people had already been deported for repeated offences of running illegal taxis and what he called 'the smuggling of passengers'. The minicab drivers are also issued with fines for repeated offences.

He said special teams of the Public Transport Agency cracked down on illegal taxi drivers because they posed threats to the quality of the RTA's taxi service and also raised concerns for the safety of commuters, especially tourists. Most of those arrested for running illegal taxis operated outside hotels, shopping centres, the airport and crowded beach areas. They operated via the use of clipboards. Clipboard Jahals? Hmmm, where have we heard that before...!

### 90-Year-Old Woman "Dumped" In Woods by Swedish Taxi Driver!

Huge outrage was recently reported in Sweden following a story that claimed a taxi driver had "dumped" a 90-year old female passenger in the woods because he considered the road to be too slippery. Instead of driving his elderly passenger to the door of the cabin in the woods of Uddevalla in western Sweden that she uses as a summer house, the driver dropped her off and told her to walk the final kilometre on her own! It took Emmy Hallgren around 30 minutes to walk the remaining distance along the icy roads.

"He just opened the door and let me out," said Emmy. "The driver caught me unaware and I should have insisted he at least took me back home if the cabin was unreachable. But he just left me in the. I do not see too well and had to feel my way along the edge of the forest to find the road and complete the walk to my summer house." Several hours later she called for another taxi and asked to be driven back home. This time it made it all the way up the road and collected the elderly lady from the door of the cabin. Six families are resident in the small community where the summer house is located and they often use cars in any weather. The school bus also goes there every day.

The incident is now the subject of an investigation by Samres, the firm which manages the publicly funded transport disability taxi service on behalf of the elderly and disabled residents of Uddevalla. "I do not consider it appropriate for a 90-year-old lady to walk alone for a kilometre in the woods," said Johan Nolenstam of Samres, "it will be fully investigated."

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