

GLOBAL NEWS



Singapore Cab Unions Merge

In a move that many London taxi drivers may envy, all six cabbie organisations in Singapore – home of ComCab owners ComfortDelgro - have unified into one major union. The six formerly represented drivers from Comfort and CityCab – both owned by ComfortDelgro – in addition to SMRT Taxis, Premier Taxis, Smart Cab and TransCab.

Adviser to the move, Seng Han Thong, said that negotiations between the six organisations had been going on for several years and called the successful merger “a natural progression,” adding that “issues affecting one operator would usually affect all.” Mr Seng also said that the merger would make the new super organisation a more efficient and effective body for drivers. He said that in the past there had been too many operators and they often clashed even when they were in agreement – something also reminiscent of London. That now looks to be in the past with the National Taxi Association expecting formalisation by April.

The President of Trans-Cab Operators' Association and secretary to the new NTA, Albert Ong, said that his association agreed to merge because it was good for all drivers, adding that current associations would be retained as “branches.”

Most of the Singapore drivers welcomed the move, but the majority seemed to agree with Comfort driver, Tony Pang, who while welcoming the new association, also echoed what many London drivers would say - whilst unity was better than seeing squabbling taxi associations, too many drivers were not members of anything anyway and just collected any negotiated settlements without paying anything. He added that even if the six associations had all worked together in agreement, then that made five of them pointless. Singapore has around 45,000 cab drivers of whom around 10,000 are members of a driver association.

Mexican Taxi Made From A Converted 727!

Global News has seen some strange taxi conversions in its time, but the Mexican cab firm who have converted an old Boeing 727 passenger plane into a limousine-style taxi, must surely take the biscuit and win the prize for the ultimate luxury cab! The company have removed the wings and turned it into a huge diesel-powered car that the makers say can take up to 50 passengers around at speeds of up to 135mph. If you have US\$2000 handy, you can book a three-hour trip in the 727 and take advantage of its dance club, bar and lounge decked out with neon strobe lights and audio and video systems – always hoping that it doesn't hit any potholes along the way! On



the upside, as you pass stretch limos, you can look at them with disdain, asking why they are so short!

Sixty people worked on the plane's transformation for three months. The six-tonne cab has a six-cylinder, turbocharged diesel engine in the back and air brakes. It is available for weddings and barmitzva's, but apparently doesn't do supermarket trips as the car parks were charging too much!

TAXI DRIVER DUMPS PASSENGER IN RUBBISH TIP!

A 66 year old taxi driver from Lahti in central Finland has received a 10-month suspended prison sentence and been ordered to pay £120 compensation to his bewildered passenger for dumping him in a rubbish tip at the beginning of this year, a Finnish court official has told Global News. The male passenger, also 66 years old, was left in the refuse tip at lunch time in freezing cold January temperatures of around 15c below freezing, without shoes or any warm clothing.

Summing up, the Judge told the court that the passenger had apparently changed his mind many times during the long drive and had also urinated on the taxi seat. The driver became more and more irritated with him and eventually drove him to the dump.

A tractor driver, who saw the cabbie push his passenger out of the car and into the tip, called the police. In his summing up, the Judge said that the taxi driver had admitted he may have acted a bit heedlessly and unsurprisingly agreed with him before passing a sentence of ten months imprisonment and suspending it. He also ordered the driver to pay compensation to his passenger.

Japanese Cabby Didn't Give A Yen For Money...

A taxi driver from the city of Kitakyushu in Japan had caused a sensation - not to mention a huge traffic jam - when he threw away the equivalent of £32,000 in Japanese Yen! He stopped his cab on the top of the city's busiest road bridge, got out holding a cloth bag and emptied the contents - millions of Japanese Yen - over the side! When questioned by the police, the driver claimed to be “very upset” about the fact that he didn't get more money from an inheritance left to him by a family member who had just died.

Police told reporters that they found the equivalent of just £6000 after a two hours search, with the other £26,000 apparently lost for ever! Members of the public and fellow cab drivers were apparently not bothered about their own work, but helped to search for the missing millions but “were unsuccessful in finding much!” All the money found was offered back to the driver, but he refused it and went home. It was reported that the following day, very few cab drivers reported for work but there was a 43% increase in arrests for drunkenness...

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