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Uber ceases operations in city

Dec 11, 2014 | Age Correspondent | New Delhi

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B.S. Bassi

As the blame game heated up between Delhi police and the Delhi government over the enforcement of ban on Uber cabs, the global taxi-booking firm on Wednesday ceased its operations, complying with the government ban imposed three days ago.

The Delhi government had on Monday imposed a ban on Uber with immediate effect, the app-based taxi booking service continued with its services till late Tuesday evening, with its drivers' claiming that they had not received any communication from the company. On Wednesday, the Delhi Government's order banning the cab company in the city was apparently hand-delivered to the Uber officials to avoid any confusion.

The Delhi traffic police and the city government on Wednesday kept on trying to hold each other responsible for the enforcement of the ban in the city. A Delhi government official said that the ban enforcement and subsequent prosecutions would have to be carried out jointly by the transport department and the Delhi police. The enforcement wing of the transport department impounded 12 radio taxis for flouting norms and more such prosecutions were being carried out. "The idea is to create fear of the law and discipline the taxis or the companies flouting the norms," said a senior official of the transport department even as sources maintained that the department "does not have adequate resources to enforce the ban and that they have asked the Delhi police through a written order to immediately implement the ban."

The traffic police, on the other hand, remained tight-lipped on the issue even as sources maintained that it was the responsibility of the transport department to implement the ban. "They (the Delhi government) should implement the ban as they had announced it." Both special commissioner police and joint commissioner police (traffic) were unavailable for comments on the issue despite repeated attempts. Till late evening, the Delhi police's PRO department didn't have any information regarding impounding of vehicles.

Meanwhile, the radio taxi associations met senior transport department officials on Wednesday and urged them to formulate a comprehensive policy, which could include guidelines for the operations of all forms of taxi services. "The radio cab policy was formulated in 2006 and it should be expanded to include other models of cab services, according to the changing needs of the market. There is a lot of confusion among the cab operators and the users. This needs to be dispelled by streamlining the checks and balances," Kunal Lalani, president of the Association of Radio Taxis, said.

Cyber expert Pavan Duggal said it may be difficult to implement the ban on Web-based cab services in the absence of an "appropriate law" on mobile apps in India. He said Uber can only restrict its app-based taxi booking service on its own as the government agencies do not have any mechanism to restrict it only to Delhi. "It is impossible to ban the Web-based cab services as there is no

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appropriate law under which mobile apps can be monitored and controlled. Besides, there is also no national policy to regulate such services," said Mr Duggal.

"Since Internet is boundary-less and there is no law to control mobile apps in India, traffic police cannot completely ban such services," Mr Duggal added.



and the world's media, including in India, have risen in solidarity.

S. Nihal Singh

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