

Concerns of Ola and Uber Drivers

Why in news?

More than 40,000 Ola and Uber drivers marched from Uber's Kurla office to Ola's office in Andheri, Mumbai using black flags to express their concerns of inadequate salary and better working life.

Why are the app-based cab drivers protesting?

- **Reduced Earnings:** The drivers are unable to make as much business in terms of the number of daily trips and earnings since November 2017.
- The reason which the drivers state is that the cab companies manipulate the booking of mobile application that allocate more trips to their owned cabs and drivers.
- **Reduced savings:** After deducting a commission of 20 % and other additional taxes from a journey fare, the driver encashes the remaining amount.
- From savings of Rs 50,000-60,000 earlier, drivers claim they hardly save up to Rs 2,000 now, which is not enough to meet their daily expenses.
- Due to reduced earnings, they face difficulties in paying monthly installments of car loans, fuel prices and maintenance cost of cars.
- But the drivers complain that cab companies have haphazardly reduced their share of income from the journey fare without a valid reason.
- **Other concerns**
 1. Unhealthy professional life, which includes working hours of over 18 hours a day to earn incentives.
 2. Blacklisting of drivers by companies.
 3. Slashing their income on the basis of customer complaints.

What are their demands?

- Drivers demand that they must be able to make business of Rs 15,000 every day.
- So cab companies should not manipulate with cab booking.
- Drivers also demand that companies must share the maintenance cost of their cars.
- Also the companies should fairly question the drivers before blacklisting them for any cause.

- Increasing their base minimum fares, a base rate of Rs 100-150 for each of their rides irrespective of the distance and time of journey are their other demands
- Regional Transport Offices and cab companies should put a maximum cap on the number of tourist cabs on the road to ensure that they get adequate business.

How has cab companies reacted to their demands?

- Cab companies, including Ola and Uber, have held repeated discussions with drivers on the issue.
- However, no specific assurance has been made to them.
- The cab companies have maintained that they currently have more than 2 lakh active driver partners in their service.
- As the nature of the mobile-based cab service remains entrepreneurial, Uber has stated that they see more than 80 % drivers remain online at work for 8 hours a day.
- They make between Rs 1,500- Rs 2,500 (net) on a daily basis.
- Companies have denied giving preferential dispatches to any car for bookings.
- Cab companies have promised to offer drivers stable earning opportunities and take care of their other monetary interventions, including financial and health insurances.

What is the stand of the Maharashtra government on the issue?

- The state government has drafted a Maharashtra City Taxi scheme, 2016 to regulate the movement of app-based cabs like Ola and Uber in the city.
- The scheme includes regulating the number of cabs they can operate in the city, color, and type of fuel and brings a cap on their minimum and maximum fares.
- After Ola and Uber drivers challenged the scheme in the Bombay High Court last year, the matter remains sub judice.

Source: Indian Express