

Judul : Ride-Hailing Services - App-based 'Ojek' Drivers Rally Over Fares, Legal Status
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RIDE-HAILING SERVICES

App-based 'ojek' drivers rally over fares, legal status

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An estimated 15,000 *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) drivers from ride-hailing companies Grab and Go-Jek staged a protest in front of the House of Representatives complex in Jakarta on Monday, affecting regular customers of the service across the capital.

Shella Sastromidjojo, 23, a recent university graduate, said she waited for almost an hour to get an app-based *ojek* driver to pick her up from Palmerah Station in West Jakarta.

"It took so long because there were no drivers around to pick up [the order]," she told *The Jakarta Post* on Monday.

She added that the fare had surged to double the usual amount for a trip that usually costs Rp 11,000 (79 US cents).

Furthermore, when she was finally on the *ojek* and heading to her destination, the motorcycle was stopped by green-clad protesters who then forced her driver to join the rally.

"I got off a bit further from my usual drop off point [because of that]," she said.

The protest, dubbed the 234 Act in reference to the date on which it was held, highlighted the



JP/Dhoni Setiawan

Team spirit: Thousands of app-based *ojek* (motorcycle taxi) drivers from competing companies blocked traffic in solidarity near the House of Representatives complex in Senayan, Central Jakarta, on Monday. The drivers demanded the government enact a law that recognizes them as a form of public transportation and urged companies to increase their fares.

ongoing tension between app-based *ojek* drivers, ride-hailing companies and regulators.

The *ojek* drivers, partially coordinated by the Indonesian Transportation Driver and App-Based Services Association (PPT JDI), protested the decreasing fares for trips, which reportedly impacted the drivers' income.

They also demanded a legal basis for *ojek* operations.

The *ojek* is not listed as a mode of public transportation in Law

No. 22/2009 on traffic and land transportation, which means the government is not able to regulate its operations.

"We ask the House of Representatives to mediate between us and the [ride-hailing] companies. We ask for a nationwide fare that is subsidized by the [companies]," PPT JDI chairman Igun Wicaksono told the *Post* on Monday.

The current fare for *ojek* trips stands at Rp 1,600 per kilometer, but Igun urged the ride-hailing

firms to subsidize trips for passengers, while increasing the fare for drivers to at least Rp 3,000 per km, and Rp 4,000 per km at the most.

He claimed that Grab and Go-Jek had rejected the request to increase fares because there was no government regulation to support it.

The absence of a legal basis to protect *ojek* drivers is also a matter of concern, he added.

"We ask for a new law or a revision of Law No. 22/2009 that can include two-wheeled vehicles as public transportation" he said.

In a contrast, app-based ride-hailing cars can be categorized as specialized chartered cars, and can therefore be regulated.

Transportation Ministerial Regulation No. 108/2017 stipulates the base and ceiling fares for app-based car services, fleet quotas for each province, as well as a requirement for drivers to have a regular type A driver's license and for cars to undergo a roadworthiness test (KIR).

The Transportation Ministry has also asked ride-hailing firms to change their legal status to that of a transportation company so they may be better regulated.

App-based companies are now regulated under the Communications and Information Ministry.

Transportation Ministry Land

Transportation Director General Budi Setiyadi said no law acknowledged the *ojek* as a mode of public transportation. The central government can only rely on regional governments to regulate the service, he added.

Budi explained that the government was concerned over the safety of motorcycles as public transportation; as around 70 percent of traffic accidents involved motorcycles.

The chairman of House Commission V overseeing infrastructure and transportation, Fary Djemi Francis, met with nine *ojek* drivers and said the commission would summon the transportation minister as well as Go-Jek and Grab representatives to follow-up on their demands.

The House has the right to push for a revision of Law No. 22/2009 to accommodate app-based ride-hailing services.

Commenting on the matter, transportation expert Djoko Setijowarno emphasized that even though the government had shifted its focus on providing efficient mass public transportation, the country should have a transitional regulation for app-based *ojek* drivers.

Representatives of neither Grab nor Go-Jek could be reached for a comment. (ami)