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Daily News & Analysis

Tuesday, November 24, 2009 12:19:00 AM

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Mumbai cabs may soon turn yellow

Surendra Gangan / DNA

The city's trademark black-and-yellow taxis may soon lose black and turn light yellow.

The state government wants to upgrade the kali-pili taxis by giving them a new look, transport minister Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil told representatives of the taxi unions at Mantralaya last week.

The unions have agreed to the changes if they are given incentives on the expenditure to be incurred on the makeover. Besides the change in colour, the minister also wants to ensure the security of passengers. For this, the government has proposed to replace the badges given to drivers with identity cards. It has also been proposed that the name of the on-duty driver be displayed inside the cab.

Vikhe-Patil told DNA that no decision has been taken yet. "We have put our ideas before the taxiwallahs and I have asked them to get back to us with their suggestions. With the changing skyline of the city and with the introduction of the metro and monorail, the taxis will also have to don a new look," he said.

"The unions are positive about the suggestions and we don't have a problem in helping them with incentives," he said.

The unions have demanded more space for advertisements, which they said would "help the owners recover the cost of makeover". AL Quadros, general secretary, Mumbai Taximen Union, said, "Currently, we are allowed to use only some part of two of the doors for advertisements. If they allow advertising on all four doors, it will be of great help."

The union also wants permission for drivers to don white uniforms in addition to the existing khaki. Vikhe-Patil said the government wants to bring down the age of taxis to 15 years in a phased manner. "We will think about financial assistance to the owners while doing this," he said.

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