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# Facing Ola, Uber shortage, flyers opt for alternatives

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Bengaluru: Fed up with cancellations by drivers of cab aggregators like Ola and Uber, many passengers in the city, especially those commuting to and from Kempegowda International Airport, are choosing other options.

Several travellers are now relying on pre-booked cab services offered by new players, particularly for airport rides. While Ola and Uber have been maintaining that they are working to reduce cancellations and refusals and increase availability, it's common to see passengers endlessly waiting for cabs at KIA, especially at night.

TOI spoke to many cab operators, most of whom have seen a spike in bookings, especially to and from KIA, in the past few months.

RideAlly, an app-based cab service, now has a customer base of more than 50,000 in Bengaluru alone. "We are getting excellent response and seeing a week-on-week growth of 10%. The fare is Rs 599 up to 30km and Rs 17 per additional km," said Hariprakash Agrawal, CEO of RideAlly. "A fleet of 500 cars is active in Bengaluru with a good number of new attachments every day. Post Omicron, we have recorded zero cancellations for airport bookings. There is no surge pricing..." added Agrawal.

Another operator, The SMART Taxi, is accepting bookings through call centre (8238883335) and WhatsApp. Dhruvam Thaker, its founder, said: "We have observed nearly two-fold growth in the number of Bengaluru airport transfers in five months. We promise punctuality, zero cancellation, zero surge (pricing) and a hassle-free experience." Thaker added: "We offer a complimentary water bottle and wafer packets during the ride to and from the airport. All toll payments are included in the bill..."

Ram Prasath, founder & CEO, Ezi drive cab service, said: "We have regular requirements for airport transfers and of late, we are adding vehicles to up our fleet strength. Customers can book rides through app/website/customer care. In 95% of the cases, vehicles are allocated once the customer booking is confirmed in our system. There is no surge pricing or pressure on drivers

to reach targets,” he said.

Sanjeev Kumar, CEO and founder of Malbork Technologies Pvt Ltd, which runs Envi, an app-based electric cab service, said: “We are starting airport rides from this month since the demand is quite high. We are in conversation with the BIAL team. We have around 100 EVs, but are ramping up our numbers in the city. We’re targeting more than 200 cabs by the end of June. We provide service with no cancellation, no surge pricing and with well- professional drivers,” he explained.

Ola and Uber were unavailable for comments.

BIAL, which operates KIA, said passengers can use airport taxi services like KSTDC, Meru and Mega as well as car rental platforms such as WTI & Carzonrent in addition to Ola and Uber. BMTC AC Volvo fleet Vayu Vajra and KSRTC’s Flybus services are also available. “We urge passengers to call our landside team on 9538882020 for assistance to avail the services,” said a BIAL spokesperson.