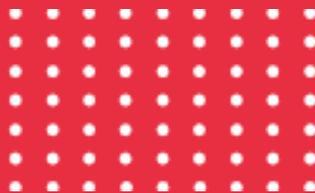


KEMENTERIAN SUMBER MANUSIA

“

# KERATAN AKHBAR KESUMA”

KHAMIS  
9 Oktober 2025





Jose said Budget 2026 must be for working people, particularly gig workers, e-hailing and p-hailing drivers, who have become the backbone of Malaysia's economy. – MASRY CHE ANI/THE SUN

## Gig workers need further support, says group

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The Gig Workers Bill 2025 may recognise e-hailing and delivery drivers for the first time, but the real test lies in whether Budget 2026 delivers concrete protection, fair pay and lower costs for the people keeping Malaysia moving.

Malaysia E-Hailing and Delivery Organisation president Jose Rizal said while the Bill is a long-overdue milestone, gig workers continue to struggle with unstable income, high platform commissions and rising fuel prices.

"Laws alone do not protect livelihoods, implementation does. We need strong enforcement, digital monitoring and funding to ensure drivers actually benefit," he told *theSun*.

He said beyond Social Security Organisation (Socso) coverage, the government should introduce stronger social safety nets under Budget 2026 to protect drivers from income shocks and insecurity.

Among the proposals are matched Employees Provident Fund (EPF)

contributions to build retirement savings, an Emergency Income Fund for temporary loss of earnings, micro-insurance for illness or vehicle downtime and affordable healthcare access for active drivers.

"Protection must reflect reality. Many gig workers live day-to-day, so safety nets should meet them wherever they are."

He added that tax incentives and reliefs should also be introduced to ease compliance and operational costs as many drivers struggle with high expenses and tax filing.

Proposals include flat-rate expense deductions for fuel, maintenance and service, tax breaks for drivers contributing to Socso or EPF and incentives for those shifting to electric vehicles (EVs).

"These small changes could make a big difference for daily earners, reducing their burden while encouraging long-term savings and greener mobility."

He also said Budget 2026 should drive sustainable sector growth without raising costs for consumers, through fairer platform practices and targeted incentives.

This includes tax rebates and

infrastructure support for EV adoption, travel passes such as My50 for low-income users and greater transparency on platform commissions.

"When drivers are protected and consumers supported, the whole ecosystem grows sustainably without anyone paying the price unfairly."

Jose added that gig worker training must be treated as an investment, not charity, and urged the government to fund upskilling and Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes such as EmpowerGIG.

He said drivers need skills in digital literacy, financial management and micro-entrepreneurship to turn gig work into a viable career path.

"Gig work should become a career pathway, not a dead end."

He said Budget 2026 must ultimately be a budget for working people, particularly gig, e-hailing and p-hailing drivers, and the freelance workforce, who have become the backbone of Malaysia's economy.

"The nation's economic policy must shift from short-term relief to long-term empowerment that builds people's capacity and dignity."