

# Women in fear of the taxi rapist

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THE spate of rape cases committed by taxi drivers have left women fearful that their next cab ride could prove a disastrous one.

"I take a lot of cabs and when I need one, I usually call a radio cab company. Sure, it may cost more but it's worth it for the peace of mind," said Diane Lee, 25, from Kuala Lumpur.

"It is alarming when we read the papers and there are so many such cases. It has come

to the point where you get anxious whenever a cab driver deviates from a normal route. You immediately get suspicious and assume the worst," she said.

Another frequent taxi user, who only wished to be known as Mashitah, 22, said sometimes, women have no choice but to board the first taxi they see.

"You can't afford to be choosy during the rush hour," said the receptionist from Damansara.

"But the fear is always there at the back of your mind that

this cab driver could turn out to be a monster," she said.

*Malay Mail* yesterday took to the streets to check on the number of taxis with heavily-tinted windows. Among the places scouted were Puduraya, Mid Valley, Bangsar, KL Sentral and the Sogo shopping complex.

We found that a large number of cabs sported tinted windows. Most had heavy tints on their rear windscreen and rear passenger windows, which made it difficult for anyone to spot the rear passengers.

It was also alarming to note

that some women had no qualms about boarding taxis which had fully-tinted windows.

At the Puduraya bus terminal, our checks showed rows of buses which sported either tinted windows or full curtains. If the curtains were drawn shut, there would be no way to see inside.

The danger of such a situation came to light in 2000, when a woman engineer, who was the last passenger onboard a city bus, was raped and strangled to death by a bus driver.



PASSENGER PERIL: Tinted windows and full curtains make buses a danger as well