

Subtitles for Maas Podcast

JEREMY: Our regular Osborne Clarke podcast looking at the legal and wider issues in Mobility as a Service or MaaS. I'm Jeremy Godley and today I'm joined by my colleagues Parveen Arora - Partner and head of the energy and infrastructure practice in BTG legal who sits in the New Delhi office and Shloka Vaidialingam - Principal Associate of BTG legal who sits in the Mumbai office.

Today we're going to look at MaaS and some wider mobility trends in India. I think it's right to say that this is a truly innovative space in India with a lot of really interesting recent developments. So over to our speakers, Parveen please tell us how you see the mobility as a service concept developing on your side.

PARVEEN: Thank you Jeremy it's a very interesting subject 'mobility as a service' coming up with our regulation in transport. Today, everybody wants a solution and the integration of services under one roof and provision of all services related to transport under one roof, will be a big industry So we can say that the integration of various forms of transport service into single mobility service, accessible on demand on gadgets or computers will be MaaS. and MaaS platforms aim to enable their users with the ability to seamlessly plan and pay for a variety of transport services in a manner that is flexible and personalised to meet their needs.

JEREMY: That's really interesting and definitely some similarities to what we're seeing in other markets. Shloka, would you tell us a little bit about how the MaaS concept is relevant to the Indian market?

SHLOKA: So actually MaaS is relatively new in India as well, but there have been a lot of discussions and certain policy initiatives (which we'll speak about shortly) that point to a growing recognition of its potential. Very simply, the rapid urbanisation in India in many cities has required much more effective means of mobility and transportation management to prevent issues such as congestion, vehicular pollution etc. So the biggest trend really in India has been you know with smartphone penetration the growth of mobile applications that provide mobility services to individuals who erstwhile were restricted to certain very traditional forms of moving from place A to place B. So people do have access to different modes of transport. That said, certain concepts in India, such as shared services, have really transformed the way people in semi-urban cities do move around now. So in that sense with the growth of traditional forms of public transport, such as buses and rail, other additional services, such as these kind of shared mobility options, are growing knowledge of electrified transport mobility options has really made MaaS a conversation in India whose time certainly seems to have come, for now.

JEREMY: That's really exciting and what really comes across I think is the sheer scale of the challenge and of the growth of MaaS in India. Certainly the problems and the challenges that are faced are much broader potentially than those that we see in the UK. Turning to those challenges it would be really interesting just to hear your perspective on what the challenges actually are for the growth of MaaS for the flourishing of MaaS and wider mobility trends in India.

PARVEEN: MaaS is a very interesting concept but has its own challenges, we cannot say that one size will fit all. India being a country of different cultures, geographies and literacy levels, it is not impossible, but difficult to bring all services under one roof. Sometimes somewhere different modes of transports are being used which are popularly used to connect even last mile connectivity, but with the improvement in regulation and requirement and over commercialisation of all these challenges will be addressed in long-term.

Government has also to come out with clear policies and provisions regarding MaaS and once it starts integrating services, I think it will give lot of value addition to people.

JEREMY: Thank you. So it sounds like integration of services is going to be key. Moving towards the trends then so you've said, that you've both said, that MaaS is becoming part of the conversation about transport in India or is here it's arrived. I'd be interested to hear some current trends in mobility that you're seeing developing in India and that might fit into this landscape.

PARVEEN: So as I said that with rapid growth in urbanisation, population and income levels also, people want more and more integrated services rather than having standalone transport modes. That very heavy increase in the vehicular traffic and with limited infrastructure, and everybody having in their own vehicle is causing a lot of problem on environment, as well as on the infrastructure. Even our cities that are appearing as most polluted cities sometimes decide all these problems are giving birth to a new trend which is you can say all integration of services and government is coming out with new policies, with new missions to address these issues. Like for example, I'll give you metro rail development. A decade back India introduced metro rail services and today we have almost operational more than 700 kilometres of metros which are running and almost 800 under operations, which will be by 2025 several even tier two cities will have metro rail also under them as a mode of transport. Then feeder infrastructure last-mile connectivity vehicles will also come under one roof, the government is also coming out with different policies and they have declared unified metropolitan transport authority also, Shloka can update on this.

SHLOKA: Following from what Praveen said, recognising increased vehicular pollution and congestion as city level and local level planning issues, the government of India had about 15 years ago issued a national transport policy which gets updated from time-to-time that actually envisions these unified metropolitan transport authorities, along the lines of those that exist in Singapore, Paris, Vancouver, to sort of streamline, coordinate and plan urban transport projects, as well as set up integrated management. So ideally, a MaaS project or an idea for a common MaaS platform across the city would emanate from this kind of authority. Unfortunately, it's still kind of at a policy level and it hasn't really taken off other than in maybe about 10-15 cities where these have been set-up and given some kind of autonomy. But this is something that they will cities will have to take up in order to decrease congestion to a great extent. Over to Parveen again.

PARVEEN: In the recent years, there's a lot of popularity on online cab aggregators which have its own advantage and disadvantage also. It has given a very easy mobility to people but at the same time, these cab aggregators do not want to integrate into one because of their global and technology backup. Plus, there is a lot of competition between Uber and Ola which are almost holding a 93 percent market of individual transportation or other transportations. Slowly cab aggregators are also coming under regulatory guidelines government has amended to make them more accountable to people and to the liabilities under motor vehicle act also. The fuel price is also increasing. That's why people are leaving their own vehicles and using these services of aggregators. Ministry of Transport and Highways also keep on coming up with alternate mobility solutions with its ambit showing an official recognition of these and then these are federal policies and then there are state government initiatives also, Shloka would you like to take it.

SHLOKA: So in terms of just trying to identify you know there are certain cities in India who have taken transport initiatives to decongest and taking these kind of issues quite seriously. For example, the city of Pune in Maharashtra has developed its own urban street design guidelines, parking policies an emphasis on sustainable mobility, such as pedestrian access and cycle routes. A lot of this comes under its smart city mission to develop smart city infrastructure to be able to streamline these services. It's also developed its own automated ticketing cards you know which can be used for paying parking fare, metro fare, auto rickshaw fair and buses are fit with GPS in order for an app to be able to predict when they'll arrive to a particular stand. So that's Pune, then we also have the southern state of Kochi in Kerala which has sort of emphasised decarbonisation of the transport sector over others and really tried to implement electrification of buses and auto rickshaws, alongside rationalisation of bus routes. So there definitely are states in India that are taking mobility challenges far more seriously than others, but it will catch on as city to city see the benefits.

JEREMY: Great, so let's turn to some legal issues in this space seeing as we're lawyers. This is to either of you, what do you see as some of the principal legal issues developing in the mobility and mobility as a service spaces?

PARVEEN: So Jeremy, the biggest issue is who is responsible for this because it is a bouquet of all the services under one umbrella. Let's say that services are not being provided for a particular segment then who should be liable? Who should be liable for deficiency of services? Which will be individual services will be addressed by various acts but overall responsibility, who will bear that? Whether you

can say as a MaaS which is leading that company or particular service provider. Now let's say for example, transport services offered in the app are available as promised if there is some deficiency that particular will be responsible. If somebody bodily injury or some loss to life happens then particular service provider will be liable. But let's in overall defects that If there are overall defects in entire services then particular you can say that MaaS provider who is providing all the services under one roof will be responsible under that. One is the consumer liability, then next big issue will come under data privacy interoperability of data that how it will happen, Shloka.

SHLOKA: Yes, so just following from what Parveen said data privacy and interoperability of data is definitely a legal issue to contend with, simply because information sharing between service providers is such a critical component of any MaaS system and the better this information sharing is implemented, the better the system and the more seamless they experience. Definitely, as per current privacy standards, current privacy laws in India which are of course not MaaS specific right now, the collector of data cannot disclose or transfer sensitive personal data of a customer to any third-party without prior permission of the individual offering the data, unless it's required for a legal obligation and we simply cannot ignore that large-scale digitisation of transport infrastructure will involve collection of large amounts of customer data, some of it which could be sensitive, some of which could be not. So the MaaS system provider has to be sensitive to these requirements you know both legal, as well as to the customer itself, and if it is the data collector it has to be able to formulate an efficient system of obtaining the customer's consent to be able to transfer this information to other transport service providers who are part of the MaaS platform, either by a click-through or a general consent or alternatively basically just ensuring that the data is anonymised. Now the entire supply chain will have to share this data along the chain to be able to provide that kind of seamless MaaS experience and confidentiality and data privacy, therefore will be a big, big legal issue to solve as and when this is implemented.

JEREMY: Thank you Shloka, so last of all let's draw this let's step back and look at some of the investment opportunities in transport. Where are you seeing these in mobility and MaaS in India?

PARVEEN: So most of the sectors which will cover under MaaS will be 100 percent foreign direct investment, which is called as automatic route in India for that investment nobody needs any approval it can directly invest and later inform the government. We are seeing increasing interest by foreign companies also - foreign direct investment coming in a big way. Like recently, road is in partnership with India's national investment infrastructure undertaken to spend two billion dollars in road projects. Macquarie infrastructure of Australia also has promised 1.45 billion to invest in road projects of around 650 kilometres. Similarly, mobility companies have also raised large amounts of foreign investment for expansion of their operations by taxi company Rapido, has also raised 120 million USD. Two-wheeler rental company Bounce, has also raised 200 million USD. So that small companies, even Eulo which gives e-bikes on rent, have also engaged with the Delhi metro rail corporation to provide the last-mile connectivity app and there are a lot of opportunities in the ancillary facility services space for transport service in India and this is going to a big way considering India's market and you can say India's demography and the way India is progressing on IT and other sectors, there are a lot of investment opportunities. So we can say that the vision of providing e-MaaS related services to the Indian consumer, is both a formidable challenge and an exciting opportunity for India in particular, it will involve combination of electric mobility services and share mobility services to truly make an impact.

JEREMY: Well thank you very much Parveen and Shloka you've taken us on a really interesting journey through MaaS and wider mobility trends and legal issues in India. It's fascinating to hear that MaaS is increasingly part of the conversation in Indian transport and I'm looking forward to hearing from you again in the future, to hear how it's developed further and how some of these emerging trends are being realised.

PARVEEN: Thank you, thank you Jeremy it was wonderful talking to you.

SHLOKA: Thank you Jeremy it was a pleasure. Thank you for having us on this podcast.