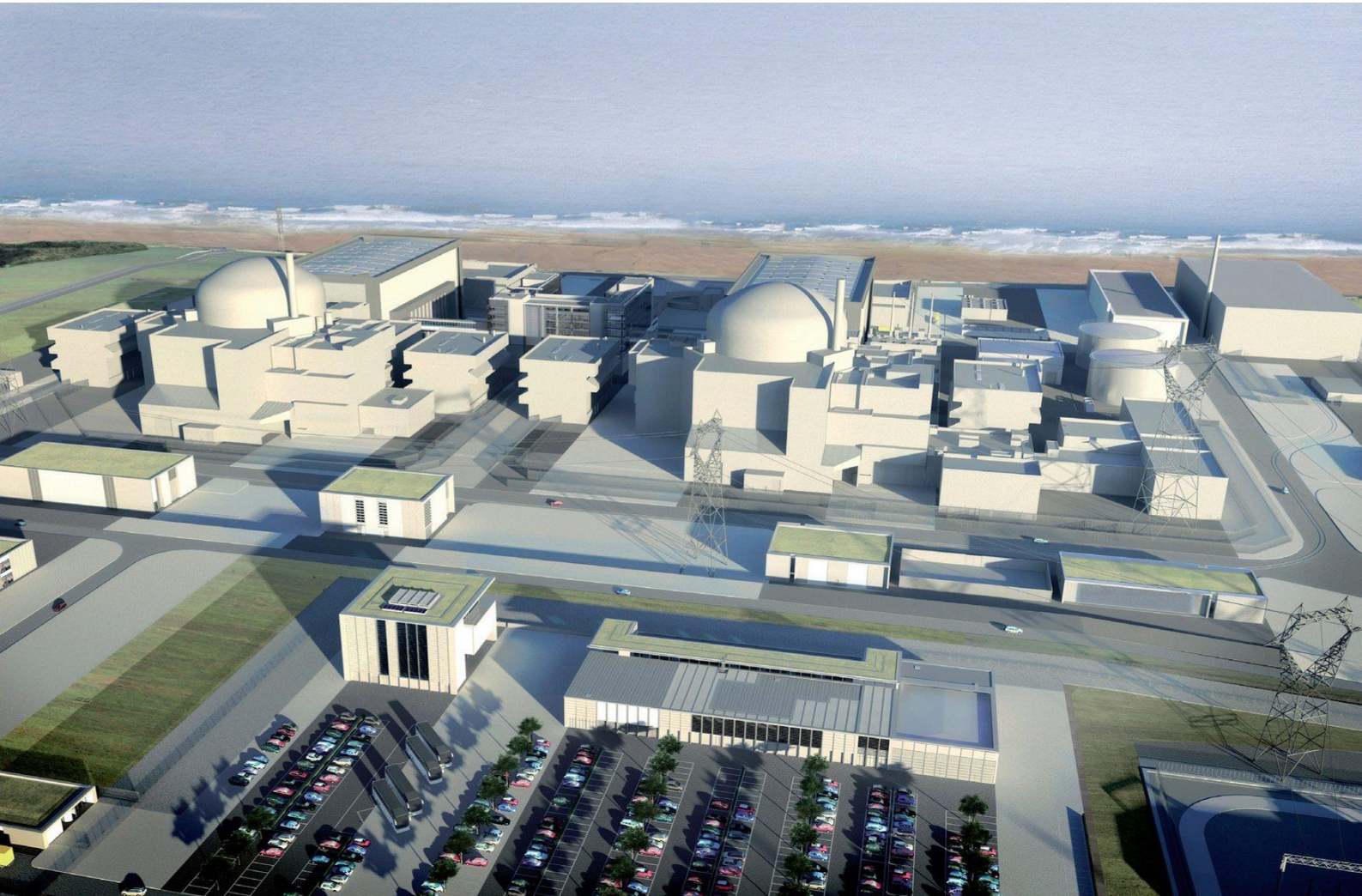


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MH370 pilot flew similar doomed route on home simulator: Confidential document



NEW YORK - The pilot who flew missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which is believed to have gone off route and crashed in the Indian Ocean, conducted a simulation of a similar path just weeks prior, New York magazine reported.

Zaharie Ahmad Shah, the highly respected airman at the helm of the plane, used an elaborate home-built flight simulator to steer himself over the Strait of Malacca and into the remote southern Indian ocean, a course with striking resemblance to the route MH370 is believed to have taken.

The finding, which casts a shadow of suspicion over the 53-year-old pilot, was published Friday by New York magazine, which obtained a confidential document from Malaysian police investigating the incident.

According to the document, the FBI recovered deleted data points from the flight simulator on Zaharie's hard drive.

"We found a flight path, that lead to the Southern Indian Ocean, among the numerous other flight paths charted on the flight simulator, that could be of interest," the document said, according to New York magazine.

Although the paths are similar, the simulated flight's endpoint is located some 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) from the area where the plane is believed to have gone down.

The Boeing 777 vanished for unknown reasons on March 8, 2014 en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people aboard, mostly Chinese nationals. It remains one of the greatest mysteries in aviation history.

The Malaysian government continues to maintain that it does not know what caused the incident.

At the time Zaharie, an opposition supporter, came under scrutiny amid unsubstantiated reports that he was upset over a jail sentence handed to Malaysian opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim hours before the plane took off or was suicidal due to personal problems.

But his family and friends strongly reject such claims as baseless.

News of the simulated flight came the same day that Malaysia, Australia and China, the three nations leading the search, said that hope of finding the flight's final resting place is "fading" and that the massive hunt will be suspended if nothing turns up in the suspected crash zone.

From feast to farce: how the big Hinkley Point C party was put on ice

It was the lunch that never was. Cantonese-style pork crackling, Somerset brie and mackerel ceviche with creme fraiche were all on the menu for the 150 VIPs invited to Hinkley Point on Friday. The guests were due to celebrate a third nuclear power station at the site finally being approved.

In keeping with the rest of the decade-long battle to build Hinkley Point C, however, the celebrations did not go as scheduled. By Friday morning the marquee was being packed away and the guests were nowhere to be seen.

The menu had the distinctive flavours of the West Country, France and China to it to reflect the interests coming together to deliver the power plant. EDF, the French energy company, is building the new nuclear plant in Somerset with financial support from China General Nuclear Power Corporation.

Planning for the party began a week ago, when EDF announced that it would make a final decision on whether to go ahead with the controversial £18bn project at a board meeting on 28 July.

The French company had not been expected to make a decision until later in the year, so the announcement was a surprise. After 10 years of debate about the cost, safety and quality of the Hinkley Point C project, the final stretch looked to be in sight.

EDF received another boost on Wednesday when shareholders agreed to buy €4bn (£3.4bn) of new shares in the company, providing another tranche of funding for Hinkley Point C. The agreement involved the French government, which owns 85% of EDF, buying €3bn of shares. By then, however, the Hinkley Point party was already in trouble.

When Theresa May met François Hollande last week Britain's prime minister told the French president that she would like to review the project herself. David Cameron and George Osborne

had been enthusiastic cheerleaders. On Wednesday night May called Hollande again to confirm the government's new timetable.

Despite the French government being the biggest shareholder in EDF, it appears the 18 members of the company's board headed for the crucial vote on Thursday afternoon with no knowledge of May's rethink.

Before the board meeting, the saga took another twist. An EDF director opposed to the new nuclear plant resigned and said he would not attend the meeting.

G rard Magnin said the project was "very risky" in his resignation letter. His departure followed that of EDF's chief financial official, Thomas Piquemal, earlier this year, which was also linked to concerns about the cost of Hinkley Point C

Magnin has a background in alternative energies and is the founder of Energy Cities, an association designed to help local authorities move towards newer forms of energy. He said in his letter that he was concerned about EDF's strategic direction and its growing reliance on nuclear.

Magnin's resignation suggested that EDF was about to approve Hinkley Point C, and so it turned out. At around 6.30pm UK time on Thursday, news emerged that the remaining EDF directors had approved the project by just 10 votes to seven. EDF hailed the news in a statement, calling Hinkley Point C a "unique asset for French and British industries".

Two hours later, however, the UK government made a more sombre announcement. Greg Clark, the business, energy and industrial secretary, said: "The government will now consider carefully all the component parts of this project and make its decision in the early autumn."

This was not what EDF was expecting. It had been preparing to sign the contracts to start Hinkley Point C with the government and its Chinese partners on Friday. It swiftly cancelled plans to hold media interviews with Vincent de Rivaz, the boss of its UK arm, and for the celebratory lunch with VIP guests. A delegation from China that had flown over for the signing of the documents realised the trip had been in vain.

Jean-Bernard Lévy, EDF's chief executive, did not know about the delay until he left an interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro, which was meant to celebrate the company's decision to build Hinkley Point C. Lévy is understood to have read the UK government statement on the internet.

There could still be a celebratory lunch in the autumn if May's government approves the project, but the hangover from the lunch-that-never-was could be painful.

Erdogan's revenge

MUCH is unknown about the attempted military coup in Turkey on the night of July 15th. Why was it botched so badly? How far up the ranks did the conspiracy reach? Were the putschists old-style secularists, as their initial



communiqué suggested; or were they followers of an exiled Islamist cleric, Fethullah Gulen, as the government claims?

But two things are clear. First, the people of Turkey showed great bravery in coming out onto the streets to confront the soldiers; hundreds died. Opposition parties, no matter how much they may despise President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, united to denounce the assault on democracy. Better the flawed, Islamist-tinged strongman than the return of the generals for the fifth time since the 1960s.

The second, more alarming conclusion is that Mr Erdogan is fast destroying the very democracy that the people defended with their lives. He has declared a state of emergency that will last at least three months. About 6,000 soldiers have been arrested; thousands more policemen, prosecutors and judges have been sacked or suspended. So have academics, teachers and civil servants, though there is little sign they had anything to do with the coup. Secularists, Kurds and other minorities feel intimidated by Mr Erdogan's loyalists on the streets.

The purge is so deep and so wide—affecting at least 60,000 people—that some compare it to America's disastrous de-Baathification of Iraq. It goes far beyond the need to preserve the security of the state. Mr Erdogan conflates dissent with treachery; he is staging his own coup against Turkish pluralism. Unrestrained, he will lead his country to more conflict and chaos. And that, in turn, poses a serious danger to Turkey's neighbours, to Europe and to the West.

One more earthquake

The failed putsch may well become the third shock to Europe's post-1989 order. Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine in 2014 destroyed the idea that Europe's borders were fixed and that the cold war was over. The Brexit referendum last month shattered the notion of ineluctable integration in the European Union. Now the coup attempt in Turkey, and the reaction to it, raise troubling questions about the reversibility of democracy within the Western world—which Turkey, though on its fringe, once seemed destined to join.

The turmoil is unsettling NATO, the military alliance that underpins Europe's democracies. Without evidence, Mr Erdogan's ministers blame America for the coup; they have demanded that it extradite Mr Gulen, who lives in Pennsylvania, or risk Turkey turning its back on the West. Electricity to the military base at Incirlik, a hub of American-led air operations against Islamic State (IS), was cut off for a time. Were Turkey an applicant today, it would struggle to qualify for NATO; yet the alliance has no means to expel a member that goes bad.

With the second-largest armed forces in NATO, Turkey has been the forward bastion of the West, first against Soviet totalitarianism and then against the chaos of the Middle East. In the early years of government under Mr Erdogan's Justice and Development (AK) party, the country became the model of a prospering, stable Muslim democracy. It sought peace with the Kurdish minority, and the economy grew healthily thanks to sensible reforms. The EU opened membership negotiations with Turkey in 2005.

But since major protests in 2013 against plans to build over Gezi Park in Istanbul, and then a corruption scandal, Mr Erdogan has become ever more autocratic. His regime has jailed journalists, eviscerated the army and cowed the judiciary, all in the name of rooting out the "parallel state" Mr Erdogan claims the Gulenists have built. As a cheerleader for the overthrow of Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, he turned a blind eye to the passage of jihadists through Turkey. Mr Erdogan wants a new constitution to allow himself to become an executive president, though he hardly lacks power. He has abandoned all caution to achieve it, not least by letting peace talks with the Kurds break down. Turkey now faces a double insurgency: by the Kurds and the jihadists.

Autocrats R Us

Handled more wisely, the failure of the coup might have been the dying kick of Turkey's militarists. Mr Erdogan could have become the magnanimous unifier of a divided nation, unmuzzling the press, restarting peace talks with Kurds and building lasting, independent institutions. Instead he is falling into paranoid intolerance: more like the Arab despots he claims to despise than the democratic statesman he might have become.

Granted, the AK party has won every election since 2002. But Mr Erdogan's view of democracy is distinctly majoritarian: though only about half of Turks vote for him, he thinks he can do what he wants. It will be principally for Turks themselves to check their president, by peacefully resisting his power grabs and backing his opponents at the ballot box.

Turkey's Western friends must urge Mr Erdogan to exercise restraint and respect the law. But what if he will not listen? Turkey is a vital ally in the war against IS. It controls the south-eastern approaches to Europe, and therefore the flow of everything from natural gas to Syrian refugees. Europe cannot change geography, but it can make itself less vulnerable, starting with a proper system to control the EU's external frontiers and handle asylum-seekers. And although Mr Erdogan holds many cards, he is not immune from pressure. Just before the coup he patched up relations with Israel and Russia.

Mr Erdogan's greatest success—the economy—has become his weak point. Many tourists are now too frightened to visit, so the current-account deficit will only gape wider. To stay afloat the country needs foreign investment and loans, so it must reassure foreigners that it is stable. With Mr Erdogan acting like a vengeful sultan, that will be hard.

The repercussions of the putsch will be felt for a long time. The coup-makers killed many fellow Turks, discredited the army, weakened its ability to protect the frontier and fight terrorists, rattled NATO and removed the restraints on an autocratic president. A terrible toll for a night of power-lust.

Two Singapore hawker stalls awarded Michelin star

SINGAPORE: Two hawker stalls - Hill Street Tai Hwa Pork Noodle at Crawford Lane and Hong Kong Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle in Chinatown were awarded a Michelin star each on Thursday (Jul 21).

This is the first time in Michelin history that Asian street stalls have been awarded the coveted star.



"It signifies that these hawkers have managed to hit the ball out of the park," said Michael Ellis, international director of the Michelin Guides, at an awards ceremony at Resorts World Sentosa. "As they say in baseball, in terms of the quality of the ingredients, in terms of the flavours, in terms of the cooking techniques, in terms of just the general emotions, that they are able to put in their dishes. And that is something that I think is really unique to Singapore."

For the first time, Australian cuisine got a Michelin star as well, through Osia Restaurant at Resorts World Sentosa. Restaurant Joel Robuchon, also at Resorts World Sentosa, was the only eatery in Singapore awarded three Michelin stars this year.

According to the guide, one star refers to restaurants that offer "high-quality cooking, worth a stop", two stars refer to those that offer "excellent cooking, worth a detour", and three stars, which is their highest award, refers to "exceptional cooking, worth a special journey."

Six other restaurants - including Odette, Les Amis and Andre - were awarded two Michelin stars.

Singapore is the first Southeast Asian country - and the fourth Asian territory - to be rated by the Michelin Guide.

Restaurants were judged based on five criteria:

- Quality of products
- Mastery of flavour and cooking techniques
- The personality of the chef in his cuisine
- Value for money
- Consistency between visits

Ahead of the awards ceremony, the Singapore Michelin Guide awarded a "Bib Gourmand" to 34 hawker stalls and eateries around the island on Jul 14. The Bib Gourmand is given to food establishments that offer a high-quality menu at a reasonable price, which in Singapore means a maximum of S\$45.

HAWKERS NOT RAISING PRICES

The two hawkers who got Michelin stars expressed happiness and surprise at their inclusion in the guide, which lists the best restaurants and hotels in 28 countries.

"I've heard of the Michelin guide but I never thought they'd come to the hawker centres and give us such an honour," said Hong Kong Soya Sauce Chicken Rice and Noodle's Chan Hong Meng.

"I'm very thankful to them because us chefs are just like university students hoping to be awarded a degree."

On his approach to food, Mr Chan said: "My thoughts are that you must treat your customers like your relatives, and they're your judges. Or we must be like doctors, providing healing for their stomachs and health."

He has a 10-year-old daughter, but is not sure she will take over from him in the food business. "The hours are quite long, and you must suffer to succeed. He added that he has considered automating his food processes.

Meanwhile, Hill Street Tai Hwa Pork Noodle's Tang Chay Seng was modest when asked about his recipe for success. "There is no secret," he said. "The ingredients just need to be fresh."

Both hawkers added that they expect queues at their stalls to get longer. "Currently the queue is about 30 to 45 minutes ... if it gets any longer people won't want to wait anymore," said Mr Tang.

"Customers usually wait about 45 minutes to an hour. But I think now, they'll probably have to wait at least one and a half to two hours," added Mr Chan. "I don't know what tomorrow will be like!"

Despite the accolade, both men said prices would not be raised for now.

Prepare for the inevitable: Terror at home

The past 12 months or so have seen a series of murderous outrages: the cafe hostage-taking in Sydney in December 2014, the assault on the offices of the Charlie Hebdo magazine in January 2015, the coordinated attacks in Paris in December 2015, followed by bombings in Brussels in March this year and then the Orlando nightclub attack last month.

In the last fortnight or so alone, there have been shootings in Dhaka and bombings in Baghdad and Saudi Arabia during the Muslims' fasting month of Ramadan.

Closer to home, there was last week's attack at a nightclub in Puchong, Selangor, when a grenade blast wounded eight people. Malaysian police confirmed on Monday it was the first successful Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attack on Malaysian soil.

In Jakarta, an attack in January killed at least seven. Just yesterday, a suicide bomber struck in Solo, Central Java. He is suspected to have ISIS links.

The attacks stoke fears that radical supporters of ISIS are opening a new front for terrorism in the region.

There are four points which stand out from this pattern.

First, that the victims of these attacks included Muslims and non-Muslims. In Baghdad and Saudi Arabia, attackers paid no heed to the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan. In fact, ISIS urged its supporters to stage attacks during the month.

Second, the targets were not security-hardened locations such as military or government installations but civilian premises. The vulnerability of such premises is obvious and impossible to reasonably mitigate.

Third, in several cases, the perpetrators were seemingly self-radicalised.

Fourth, each attack can be seen as an attempt to top the preceding one in scale of carnage and viciousness.

Singapore has received the attention of terrorists before. As far back as the 1960s, we were subject to waves of bombings perpetrated by first, communists, and later, Indonesian insurgents - two of whom were caught and hanged in 1965.

In more recent times, the Internal Security Department disrupted planned attacks by Jemaah Islamiah in 2001 and made several arrests of terrorists or terrorist sympathisers in subsequent years.

The ministries of Home Affairs and Defence have been coordinating and investing in new capabilities to upgrade operational responsiveness in the event of an attack. This is to be welcomed but these are responses and not preventive. In the past, we could rely on shows of force as a deterrent. But it is clear from all the recent attacks that the new generation of terrorists care nothing for their own survival and hence will not be dissuaded by the availability of highly trained contingency forces. Rather, it would motivate them to cause maximum harm in the minimum time before these forces engage and overwhelm them.

It is time for us to prepare for the inevitable - an attack on Singapore, probably on a vulnerable civilian target - and ask ourselves how best we should manage.

Singapore is a very small country, with a compact heterogeneous population and whose economic premise is to be open to and engaged with the global economic, capital and labour flows. A large part of Singapore's attractiveness to foreign investors and to global talent is its perceived social and political stability and security.

Thus the impact of a terrorist attack would have implications beyond terror and carnage caused. It would shatter the perception of Singapore as a safe place to live and invest in.

The reputational damage would not be limited to the views of foreigners but would deeply wound the psyche of Singaporeans - who have become conditioned to taking their security for granted after five decades of internal calm and social harmony.

It is important that Singaporeans consider how they would respond to an eventual attack so that proactive and deliberate steps can be taken to strengthen the security, not just of our

physical installations, but of our civil bonds.

To do so, we should be thinking of a response that extends far beyond the limit of the capacity of the government agencies.

It is at the community level that the vital preparations must be in place. These should not be "go through the motions" exercises but a serious and sustained engagement at the grassroots level of how best to and who will do what and when to immediately respond to calm public anger, manage social distrust and prevent knee-jerk retaliations - at the level of each block, each school and at each street corner.

These "social responders" should be seen as vital complements to the first responders such as police, military and civil defence personnel. Protocols should be in place to "recluse" any social responder personally affected by attacks. In a small community, mass attacks are likely to touch most Singaporeans. The only question would be matter of degrees of remove from the victims.

Social responders should be volunteers, not people compelled by a system seeking to tot up numbers to meet a target. They should be filtered on the basis of emotional and motivational suitability to fill this sensitive but crucial function. Training and practice, both initial and recurrent, should be provided to prepare them adequately. Their contingent contribution should be factored into an overall response plan which extends beyond the dimension of security to consider social, political and economic considerations.

We should also lay contingent plans for a reserve of blood donors for the various blood types who can be tapped immediately upon an attack to provide critical reinforcement to the blood bank.

Psychologists and social workers should be identified in the civilian community, and not just the government agencies, to provide victim, affected family and general community-level psychological support and aftercare.

The Ministry of Finance should have a quick response plan to support the economy through the aftershock of an attack while the Monetary Authority of Singapore should be prepared to

support the Singapore dollar in the event of a panic sell-off.

Industry and trade associations and large corporates also have a function to calm the workforce, reinforce positive messages and avoid inadvertently alienating staff with ethnic or religious characteristics affiliated with the terrorists.

These necessary remedial measures are collective responses which are secondary to the most determinative of choices - which will be individual. All Singaporeans have to get up the next day, share their streets with one another as they do every day, and go to work or school even as they ache with the pain of loss and strain with fear of further attacks.

To defeat the terrorists is not only to kill them; more fundamentally, defeating terrorism means having the resolve not to let terror dominate or change us; having the determination not to turn against one another; having the commitment to continue to survive and succeed; and carrying on the adamant and insistent keeping of faith with the ideal of being one people and one nation.

If potential terrorists assess that Singapore, with its hard defence and strong sinews of resilience, is unlikely to be shaken from its course, that would be the best deterrent of all.

Desperately seeking drivers, Uber and Lyft offer car options

No car? No problem for ride sharing companies like Uber and Lyft.

These companies are offering rentals, leases and financing deals aimed at getting more drivers on the road. After all, the more drivers they sign up, the more rides are available and the more money they make. But critics say drivers are paying high and even predatory prices.

“The lease terms are awful, you could buy the car for what they are being leased for, or maybe even less,” said Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate, of Uber’s Xchange leasing program.

The deals have also caught some regulators’ attention. The California Public Utilities Commission is probing whether some of these leasing and renting arrangements run afoul of its requirement that ride share drivers use a “personal vehicle.”

Uber and Lyft say these programs serve people who are eager to work for a ride sharing company but do not have a vehicle or don’t have one that qualifies. Requirements of many traditional leases, such as mileage limits or long-term contracts, don’t work well for their drivers.

Dee Taylor of Houston, who says she was unemployed when she stumbled on Uber’s Xchange, is among the satisfied customers.

The program offers would-be drivers a three-year lease on an Uber-approved car for a \$250 fee plus weekly payments deducted from their pay. Xchange provides unlimited miles, maintenance and allows drivers to get out of the lease after 30 days, with two-week’s notice.

Taylor pays \$160 a week for a slightly used Ford Escape. That’s well above what she would pay in a typical lease or loan, but Taylor says there’s no way she would have qualified because of her credit score and lack of income. And it got her back to work: she now brings home an average \$700 a week with four days of work.

“All I have to do is work one day (a week) and this car is mine,” Taylor said. “It’s like a blessing and I don’t even go to church.”

Uber says it launched its vehicle solutions program because about 15 percent of the people who signed up to drive lacked a qualifying vehicle. It now offers weekly rentals, flexible leases, traditional leases and purchase discounts through certain automakers. At the end of 2015, more than 50,000 people had used one of those services and Uber expects that number to double this year.

Still, the program has had its issues. A leasing partnership with a U.S. arm of Banco Santander was criticized for its prices and practices. Uber ended the arrangement but not before it left some scars.

Ousmane Abdoulaye of Maryland had recently moved to the U.S. from Africa when he leased a car through the Santander program in 2014. He paid \$1,000 upfront, plus faced monthly payments of \$870. But after two weeks he was deactivated by Uber as a driver due to poor customer feedback.

With no job or way to make payments, Abdoulaye says he could not get anyone at Uber or the dealership to help him give the car back. Meanwhile, he began getting calls from a creditor for the payments due.

Ultimately, with help from the state Office of Consumer Protection, he returned the car and terminated the contract. He now works as a landscaper but recalling the incident still gets him mad. “I never want to hear about Uber ever again,” he said.

New programs to match drivers with cars continue to pop up.

Lyft’s Express Drive rental program, launched in March through a partnership with GM, now operates in four cities. It’s a weekly rental, available for up to eight weeks. It costs \$99 a week, plus a fee for mileage. But if you drive enough, the mileage fee is waived and if you drive even more, you pay nothing.

Uber and Lyft declined to say how much money they earn from these deals. Uber said its focus is getting drivers on the road, while Lyft said its program was designed in a way that “makes sense” for Lyft, GM and the drivers.

Carlos Correa could have qualified for a traditional loan or lease but instead opted to sign up for Lyft’s Express Drive because he drove enough for costs to be waived. Other programs cost too much, he felt. Correa used to drive his own car for Lyft but decided he prefers to put the wear and tear of his work on another vehicle.

“I started kind of doing the numbers as far as what I would have to pay for down payment and monthly costs, lease versus purchase, maintenance and it started to add up, I was looking for an alternative,” he said.

Not only are traditional financing deals not designed for ride share drivers, purchasing a car has become less affordable: a new study by Bankrate.com finds that a household earning the median income cannot afford the average-priced new car or light truck in any of the 50 largest cities in the U.S. And a purchase saddles the owner with maintenance costs while the car’s value shrinks. Part-time drivers may prefer rentals. Others may want to test out being a driver or need a solution while their car is in the shop.

“It’s expensive but it does suit a ride share driver well,” said Harry Campbell, a driver for Lyft and Uber who runs the popular website Therideshareguy.com.

Campbell points out that turnover is high among drivers and pay has shrunk recently. So potential drivers increasingly might not have the cash to qualify for traditional financing.

“It’s subprime rates, but it’s subprime candidates,” he said.

For consumers with good credit, auto loan rates have never been lower and financing terms are very attractive right now, said McBride of Bankrate. Experian data shows the average loan payment for a used car is between \$334 and \$385 a month. Dee Taylor pays about twice that to lease her used vehicle.

“It’s like saying ‘I’d love to be a pilot but I don’t have a plane,’” McBride said. “If you don’t have a car and you want to be in the ride sharing business, you are putting yourself at a real disadvantage.”



Under the Macroscopic is a weekly summary of what's happening around the world and what's worth pondering. Stay on top of international and local news with this bulletin produced by the Raffles Economics and Current Affairs Society.

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