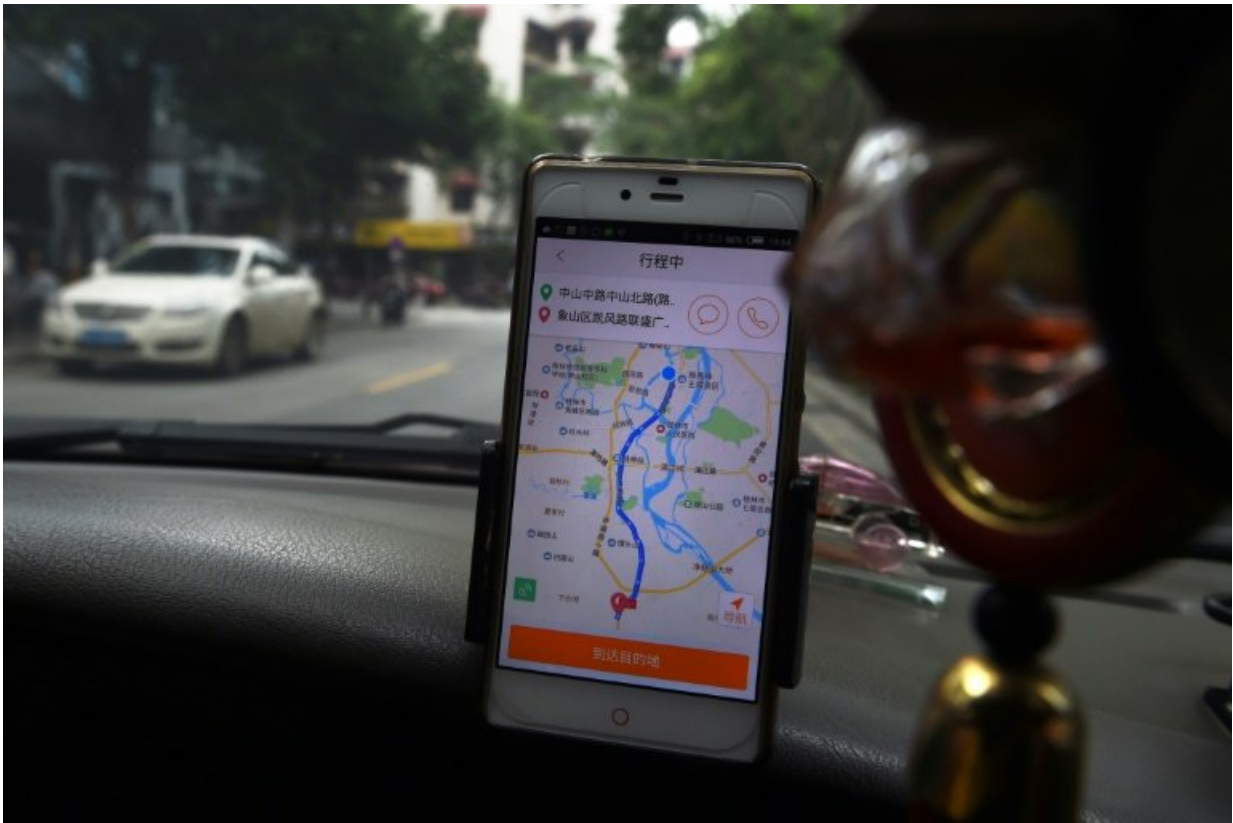


China suspends carpool services following murders

September 11 2018



Hitch is separate from Didi Chuxing's main ride-hailing service, which is not affected by the government suspension order

China has ordered the suspension of carpool services offered by ride-hailing firms until tighter safety measures are implemented, seeking to

ease fears after two users of sector leader Didi Chuxing's Hitch service were murdered.

Local governments across the country were ordered to review the backgrounds and qualifications of all drivers signed up with web-based carpooling and other private car-share services.

Drivers and cars deemed unqualified will be removed from such services by the end of this year, said a joint directive issued late Monday by the transport and public security ministries.

Service operators in the meantime must take a range of [safety measures](#) including strengthening alarm and rapid-response mechanisms to enable passengers to indicate when they are in danger.

They also will be required to establish 24-hour safety management and emergency response teams, and must furnish real-time information on drivers and passengers to police.

It did not specify how long the suspension would last.

Car-pooling services such as Hitch pair up people moving in the same direction so they can share travelling costs.

Hitch is separate from Didi Chuxing's main ride-hailing [service](#), which is not affected by the government suspension order.

Didi Chuxing, used by hundreds of millions in China, came under intense criticism last month after a 20-year-old female passenger was raped and murdered by her Hitch driver in the eastern city of Wenzhou.

Didi Chuxing faced boycott calls after it emerged that the company did not act on a complaint about the driver just one day before the killing.

The episode fuelled pressure for greater regulation of carpooling services, which generally face less stringent requirements and oversight than regular ride-hailing.

Didi Chuxing was already under the gun after police said in May that a Hitch driver killed a 21-year-old female flight attendant whom he had picked up.

State media reported she was stabbed at least 20 times and that the killer's dead body was later found in a nearby river.

Following last month's murder, Didi suspended Hitch and has temporarily halted all late-night ride-hailing for a week beginning last Saturday while it implements safety measures.

Didi Chuxing muscled Uber out of China in 2016 after a bruising turf battle. It now claims 30 million [drivers](#) and more than 550 million users across its various services.

A Didi Chuxing spokesperson told AFP the company had no new comment on the government-ordered [safety](#) drive.

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