

Uber rape victim's lawyer slams firm's new safety measures and calls for 'real change'

By PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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New safety measures put in place by taxi service company Uber in India are a far cry from the security provisions riders need, said a lawyer for the woman executive who was allegedly raped in New Delhi by a driver of the firm.

“Additions of a panic button and ride share notification to the Uber app in India are far cries from the safety measures riders need,” prominent New York attorney Douglas Wigdor said in a statement on Wednesday.

Wigdor said that unfortunately, neither of these measures would have prevented the rape of his client.

He termed the new security measures as yet another obvious marketing ploy to garner the support of the people of Delhi who deserve more.

“Hopefully our lawsuit will bring about real change so that others are not needlessly placed in harm's way,” he said.

The woman, who was allegedly raped by Uber driver Shiv Kumar Yadav in December last year while returning home at night, has sued Uber in a California court, seeking unspecified damages and alleging that Uber does not adequately screen its drivers.

Beginning Wednesday, Uber has launched an in-app panic (SOS) button that will allow a rider to alert local police at the push of a button in case of an emergency.

It will also introduce a safety net feature, which would allow users to easily share their trip details and real-time location with up to five friends and family members.

Last week, Uber had said it has also established a dedicated local ‘Incident Response Team’ that oversees and responds to incidents against property and person reported by riders and will also receive a notification, in addition to the local police, when the in-app panic button is pressed.

The specialised team, which would assist local law enforcement officers during distress situations, has completed an extensive programme by Uber’s US safety experts.

Last week, Uber had also launched a nationwide third party driver screening programme in India with First Advantage, a global firm specialising in background checks.

