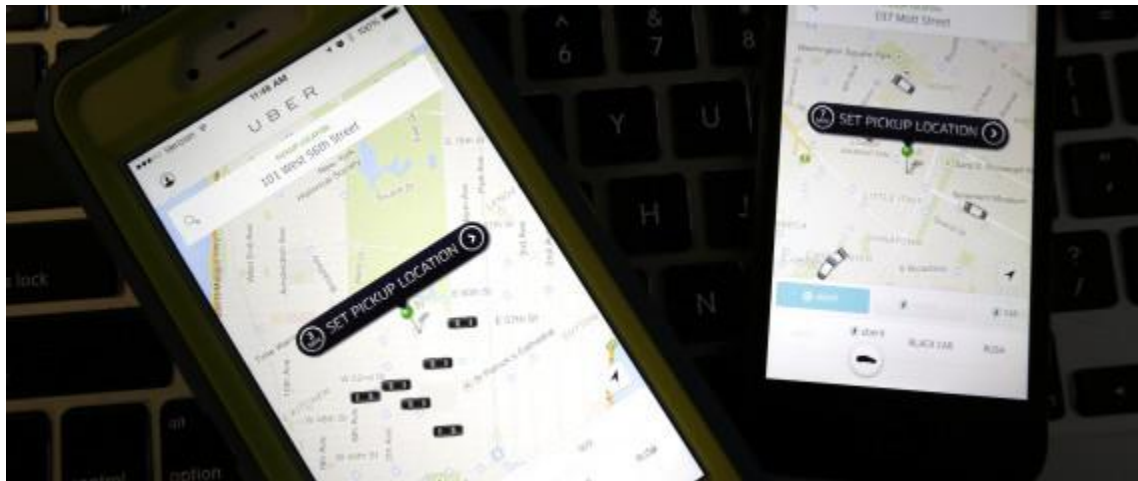


Uber Panic Button A Marketing Ploy: Rape Victim's Lawyer

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Washington - The US-based lawyer of a Delhi woman executive who was allegedly raped by an Uber cab driver in December, Wednesday dismissed the addition of a panic button to the web-based US taxi firm's app in India as a "marketing ploy".

"Today's additions of a panic button and ride share notification to the Uber app in India are far cries from the safety measures riders need," New York-based lawyer Douglas H. Wigdor said in a statement on Twitter.

"Most unfortunately, neither of these measures would have prevented the rape of our client and are yet another obvious marketing ploy to garner the support of the people of Delhi who deserve more," he said.

"Hopefully, our lawsuit will bring about real change so that others are not needlessly placed in harm's way," said Wigdor, who last month filed a case against Uber accusing it of focusing on profits over the safety of its passengers.

Uber, which had recently introduced enhanced background checks, added two new safety features Wednesday.

The new panic button lets passengers taking a trip immediately contact local police. Users will need to tap the button and confirm the call.

The second feature -- Send Status -- replaces Uber's existing "Share My ETA" option.

It sends live GPS information along with driver and vehicle details to up to five of the passenger's contacts.

Demanding a trial by jury, the Delhi woman's lawsuit filed in a California court seeks a direction to Uber to "remedy the effects of the unlawful conduct" alleged in the complaint, "and to prevent repeated occurrences in the future".

It also seeks an award of unspecified amount of punitive damages to be determined at trial, plus prejudgment interest, to compensate the victim "for all physical, monetary and/or economic harm".

The accused driver, Shiv Kumar Yadav, is currently on trial on rape and kidnapping charges in Delhi.

Delhi banned Uber and several other web-based taxi firms for failing to carry out adequate driver checks in early December.

But last month, Uber announced resumption of its services in Delhi.