

BPO units to get code of conduct soon

All Third-Party Workers' Profiles Will Be Compiled

By Payal Saxena/TNN

Gurgaon: Soon, there will be a stringent code of conduct for all BPO units across the country to ensure the safety and security of their employees. This comes in the wake of HP employee Prathibha Srikanth Murthy's rape and murder last week in Bangalore.

The Call Centre Association of India (CCAI) — in conjunction with the Confederation of Indian Industry, major call centres across the country and the police departments of all states — will spell out a code of conduct. A detailed report of all the measures will be available on the web by the month-end.

CCAI president Sam Chopra said, "Cab drivers' activities should be reined in. We'll intensively call for police verification of all third-party workers in the industry as we can't afford to take chances with anyone. All major call centres will need to make this exercise mandatory. Whether employees, caterers, contractors or drivers, a record of their profile will be maintained. Departments will be formed to impart training to the drivers."

CCAI has informally received a positive response from all major call centres. CCAI chief PRO Deepak Kapoor, "After the unfortunate incident that took place in Bangalore, we had an intensive discussion with major call centres to track down what existed and what was missing in the steps taken by them. Though the drivers and contractors hired by the companies have all the required documents and the cabs have identification numbers, their profile needs to be looked into."

According to the call cen-



Members of the Union for ITeS Professionals pay homage to Prathibha Srikanth Murthy on Sunday.

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SMS as life-saver? An SMS could have saved Prathibha's life if her employer had sent a message giving out the vehicle number, driver's name and what time he's supposed to pick the employee.

Profiling BPOs, cabs: The Bangalore police will embark on a project to enumerate BPOs and the number of vehicles used by them.

HP saw no alert: HP GlobalSoft CEO Som Mittal said the company's transport desk did not see "an alert" when Prathibha didn't arrive at the office on time. "There are instances when people come in late."

tres, if a woman is picked up and dropped alone at night she should be escorted by a security guard. But what is the security guard up to — when not on duty — seems to be no one's responsibility.



Call centre cab drivers pay their respects at a condolence meeting held for the murdered BPO employee, Prathibha Srikanth Murthy, in Bangalore on Sunday.

SMS could have saved her

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore: An SMS could have saved her life if the employer had sent a message giving out the vehicle number, driver's name and what time he's supposed to pick the employee. This was one of the could-haves, a result of a condolence meeting held for Prathibha Srikanth Murthy by the Union for ITES Professionals (UNITES) on Sunday.

Candles were lit and five minutes of silence was observed by the members as a mark of respect for the departed soul.

Angry and upset over the incident of rape and murder of the HP employee, union members questioned many of the 'practices' followed by BPO

units. The treasurer and state secretary of UNITES, Raghavan Iyengar, speaking for the benefit of the 3-lakh strong workforce in the industry, "If an employer gives out the information on the vehicle, the employee when in doubt can verify facts, it is a sure method of authentication."

The union is also peeved that they were not allowed to have a dialogue with HP, the company where Prathibha worked. "Many of these companies gheraoed the government for infrastructure, what about accountability for their own employees? What kind of compensation will the company give the family?" are some questions the union is raising.

"According to International labour standards, in the night-

time, 45 minutes should be considered one hour because of the body rhythm. How come this is never followed?" ask members of the union. HP products cannot be substituted, what about life, was a resounding question the members asked.

The union which has five branches across the country, is trying to get protection under the Trade Union Act and be involved in the decision-making process of organisations. They are actively urging citizens including call-centre employees to participate in a signature campaign to ensure that this sort of an incident should never happen again. People can sign up online also, on the union's website, www.unitespro.com.