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Centre Pushes Platforms To Drop 10-min Deliveries, Ultra-fast Race Faces Reset

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Article Content:

In a major development, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has secured agreement from major delivery aggregators to remove the mandatory ten-minute deadline

Amid mounting concerns over the safety of gig workers, the Centre has urged quick-commerce platforms to move away from advertising ultra-fast delivery timelines, including the widely promoted “ten-minute delivery” promise.

In a major development, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has secured agreement from major delivery aggregators to remove the mandatory ten-minute deadline, according to media reports. The issue was discussed at a meeting with platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, Zomato and Swiggy, where delivery timelines and rider safety were reviewed.

Blinkit has already removed the 10-minute delivery claim from its branding, while other aggregators are expected to follow in the coming days, the media reports claimed. The step is intended to reduce road risks and improve working conditions for gig workers in the fast-growing quick-commerce sector.

“This step shows that the government is fully sensitive and committed to the safety, dignity, and lives of gig workers. For this, Cait expresses its gratitude to the central government. Today’s action by the government against misleading delivery claims confirms that what I have been saying both inside and

outside Parliament was correct. This entire ecosystem requires structural reforms, not cosmetic changes. This is only the beginning,” highlighted Praveen Khandelwal, National Secretary General of Confederation of All India Traders (Cait) and Member of Parliament.

The government said the labour minister had nudged companies to discontinue branding that promotes ultra-fast delivery, aligning industry practices with the government’s focus on worker safety. While leading platforms have agreed to remove the 10-minute delivery branding, responses from quick-commerce companies are still awaited.

Big Win For Unions

Unions have been protesting against the quick commerce companies. One of the key demands of the unions involve the discontinuation of the 10 to 20 minute delivery services, which puts the lives of the workers at risk. Earlier, Raghav Chadha, an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha member, demanded regulations on quick commerce and app-based delivery and service businesses, in favour of gig workers.

Gig and Platform Service Workers Union (GIPSWU) submitted a demand letter to the Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandviya on 24 December 2025. The union also filed a complaint to National Human Rights Commission on 12 January 2026.

“This is an opportunity for all stakeholders, governments, companies, and workers, to come together. Companies can lead by adopting verified, worker-centred systems that prioritise wellbeing, safety and dignity, proving that responsible business and innovation go hand in hand,” stated Nirmal Gorana, National Coordinator, GIPSWU, while welcoming the step.

The latest development follows heightened scrutiny of the sector after a nationwide flash strike on New Year’s Eve. According to a gig union report, over two lakh delivery riders across India refused to deliver food, groceries and other orders, demanding better pay, safer working conditions and an end to unrealistic delivery timelines.

During the Monsoon Session of Parliament in 2024, Khandelwal raised the serious issue in Parliament. Expressing concern over the unregulated expansion of quick commerce, he introduced a private member’s bill seeking a complete ban on dark stores.

Subsequently, on 22 April 2025, at a national press conference held at the Constitution Club, Cait exposed before the country the ‘dark reality’ of quick commerce and ecommerce, the association said. Taking this forward, on 26 October 2025, Cait sent a detailed letter to the central government highlighting violations of laws by quick commerce and ecommerce companies, neglect of labour safety norms, and the exploitation of delivery personnel.

“I am deeply grateful to the central government for its timely, decisive and compassionate intervention in enforcing the removal of the “ten-minute delivery” branding from quick commerce platforms. This is a much needed step because when “ten minutes” is printed on a rider’s tshirt/ jacket/ bag and a timer runs on the customer’s screen, the pressure is real, constant, and dangerous,” stated Raghav Chadha, Member of Parliament from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on X.

After reports surfaced that a Zepto delivery boy lost his life in a road accident under Mehdiapatnam

police station limits in Hyderabad, the company now issued a clarification, denying its association with the deceased worker. Expressing condolences over the accident, the quick commerce company stated that the individual mentioned was not associated with Zepto and was not delivering for Zepto at the time of the accident.

“This has been confirmed through thorough database checks, facial recognition and CCTV reviews across our store network. We are fully cooperating with the Mehdiapatnam police station and have submitted our findings to rectify the initial misconception,” the company stated on X (formerly Twitter).

Earlier, news agency ANI reported that a person named Abhishek, a gig worker, lost his life in a road accident. He was a native of Shekpet and worked as a delivery boy for Zepto. He was going on a two-wheeler from Mehdiapatnam when a bus collided with him and he lost his life on the spot, the report added.

India's fast-growing gig economy is increasingly functioning as a full-time labour market rather than a source of flexible or transitional work, leaving millions of young workers stuck in low-paying roles with little chance of upward mobility, according to a report by Primus Partners.

Based on a survey of more than 1,100 platform-based gig workers across major Indian cities, the report finds that around 61 per cent of gig workers work eight hours or more a day, while 43 per cent work all seven days of the week. More than half are “effectively full-time”, combining long hours with at least five-and-a-half working days each week.

Average monthly earnings remain modest at around Rs 22,500, with income growth driven mainly by longer workweeks rather than promotions or skill-based progression, the report said. Moving from a five-day to a six-day week adds roughly Rs 2,500 per month, underscoring what the authors describe as “grind-based growth”.

While the removal of ten-minute delivery branding is an immediate course correction, it also sets the stage for a broader regulatory reset of the gig economy, one that could reshape delivery timelines, platform accountability and labour protection.