

# Govt taps logistics firms to link consumers with kirana shops

John Sarkar & Sidhartha | TNN

**New Delhi:** The government is ready with a scheme to get kirana stores to directly deliver essential goods at your doorstep using the network of logistics firms that have hitherto provided last-mile connectivity to e-commerce companies.

The idea is to use messaging platforms such as WhatsApp to connect consumers with kirana stores, who will pay via e-tools such as UPI and BHIM. The logistics firms then come into play, to pick up grocery and other products from the stores through their network of delivery boys. And, the Aarogya Se-



**1.5cr** distributors, retailers & wholesalers deal in essential items

**₹38L cr** is the size of grocery retail in India

**₹7-14k cr** value of online grocery retail

Source: Redseer, CAIT

tu is proposed to be put to use to avoid any risk in the chain. Officials said states and local administration can also use the

network to deliver grains and pulses from PDS to consumers.

► **Helping kiranas, P 11**

# Govt using crisis to help kiranas take on biggies

► From P 1

Currently, district administrations implementing the lockdown across states rely on local traders to supply using e-rickshaws and other modes. The department for promotion of industry and internal trade, has already tested it in six cities, including Varanasi, and officials said the platform would be deployed over the next few days.

Manufacturers are being onboarded and aligned for supply of essential commodities, even as tech partners are being roped in for logistics and digitization of their services, sources told **TOL**.

## ROPES IN TECH PARTNERS

While it will help retailers as well as well producers and wholesalers meet the demands of consumers, the government also seems to be using the Covid-19 crisis as an opportunity to make kirana stores self-sufficient to take on their much-celebrated rivals—supermarket chains and e-commerce players, who are unable to meet consumer needs during the lockdown.

“During the crisis, it has been reiterated through several meetings with industry and government stakeholders that kiranas have stood tall while the online machinery has collapsed. Online grocery is just 2-5% of overall grocery business. Kiranas are the lifeline. Our sales to kiranas have increased by 50% during this time. At a time when FMCG players are operating at 15-20% capacity, they should be given first preference,” Arvind Mediratta, Metro Cash & Carry India.