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Blinkit hits Khasi trade wall

KHADC blocks quick-commerce giant's Meghalaya entry to shield local retailers



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The Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC) has slammed the brakes on Blinkit's entry into Meghalaya, refusing to grant the quick-commerce platform the mandatory trading licence needed to operate in the Khasi Hills.

The council's reason is simple: protect local traders.

KHADC Chief Executive Member Winston Tony Lyngdoh said the council would not permit any business model that threatens the livelihoods of indigenous traders and neighbourhood retailers. According to the council, more than 4,000 grocery shops under its jurisdiction could be affected if app-based delivery platforms offering steep discounts and rapid doorstep delivery are allowed to expand unchecked.

The move comes as Blinkit, owned by Eternal (formerly Zomato), has been aggressively expanding beyond India's metros into smaller cities. But in Meghalaya, the company's plans have run into the unique regulatory framework of the Sixth Schedule, where autonomous district councils exercise significant powers over trade and commerce.

Lyngdoh said the council had adopted a consistent stand on the issue, revealing that similar licences had earlier been denied to other quick-commerce ventures, including Instamart, to safeguard traditional retailers.

Blinkit had reportedly secured a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Dorbar Shnong and Rangbah Shnong of Nongrim Hills and had even begun preliminary operations by engaging delivery partners. However, the company was forced to suspend its plans after failing to obtain the mandatory trading licence from the KHADC.

The decision has sparked fresh debate over the rapid spread of quick-commerce platforms into smaller towns. While supporters argue that such services create jobs and improve consumer convenience, critics fear they could undermine thousands of small family-run stores that form the backbone of local economies.

For now, KHADC has made its position clear: protecting indigenous businesses takes precedence over the arrival of 10-minute delivery services in Meghalaya.



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