CCPA Imposes ₹10 Lakh Penalty on Ola for Pre-Ride ‘Tip’ Feature; Directs Platform to Discontinue Practice

Authority finds Ola's advance payment prompts misleading; holds the practice to be an unfair trade practice and a dark pattern

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The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of **₹10 lakh** on **ANI Technologies Private Limited**, which operates the ride-hailing platform Ola, for soliciting additional payments from consumers before completion of their journeys through its pre-ride ‘tip’/‘add-on’ feature. The Authority has directed Ola to immediately discontinue the practice, holding that it misleads consumers, constitutes an unfair trade practice and employs a dark pattern.

The order was passed by the CCPA, headed by Chief Commissioner Smt. Nidhi Khare and Commissioner Shri Anupam Mishra, following an examination of the feature that prompted consumers to make an additional payment while the app was searching for a driver, suggesting that it could improve their chances of securing a ride faster. Although **Ola subsequently renamed the ‘tip’ as an ‘add-on’, the underlying practice remained unchanged**.

> The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a ₹10 lakh penalty on Ola for misleading pre-ride payment prompts and directed the discontinuation of the feature. A firm step against dark patterns, unfair practices and misleading claims, reaffirming the commitment to protecting consumer rights and ensuring transparency. ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಗ್ರಾಹಕ ರಕ್ಷಣಾ ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರವು (CCPA), ಓಲಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯ ರೈಡ್‌ಗೆ ಮುನ್ನವೇ ಪಾವತಿ ಮಾಡುವಂತೆ ಗ್ರಾಹಕರನ್ನು ದಾರಿ ತಪ್ಪಿಸುವ ಸೂಚನೆಗಳನ್ನು ನೀಡಿದ್ದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ, ಓಲಾ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗೆ ₹10 ಲಕ್ಷ ದಂಡ ವಿಧಿಸಿದೆ ಮತ್ತು ಈ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥೆಯನ್ನು ತಕ್ಷಣವೇ ನಿಲ್ಲಿಸುವಂತೆ ಆದೇಶಿಸಿದೆ. 'ಡಾರ್ಕ್ ಪ್ಯಾಟರ್ನ್‌ಗಳು', ಅನಗತ್ಯ ಹಾಗೂ ಅನ್ಯಾಯದ ಪದ್ಧತಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ದಾರಿ ತಪ್ಪಿಸುವ ಕ್ರಮಗಳ ವಿರುದ್ಧ ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಈ ಕಠಿಣ ಕ್ರಮವು, ಗ್ರಾಹಕರ ಹಕ್ಕುಗಳನ್ನು ರಕ್ಷಿಸುವ ಹಾಗೂ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆಯನ್ನು ಖಚಿತಪಡಿಸುವ ಬದ್ಧತೆಯನ್ನು ಪುನರುಚ್ಚರಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. #CCPA @jagograhakjago
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> — Pralhad Joshi (@JoshiPralhad) November 12, 2026

Additional payment prompts created a misleading impression of faster ride confirmation

The CCPA examined the different versions of the Ola app interface and found that messages such as **“Adding a tip might help increase the chances of getting a ride faster”**, **“Tip now to boost the chances of getting a ride sooner”** and **“Improve your chances of quicker ride confirmation!”** suggested that paying extra would help consumers secure a ride faster.

The Authority observed that these messages appeared while the app was searching for a driver and directly above pre-set payment amounts. This created the impression that an additional payment could speed up the booking process. The use of qualifying words such as ‘might’ and ‘chance’ did not alter the overall impression conveyed to consumers.

Ola's own booking data for 1–15 June 2026 did not support this claim. Ride requests carrying an add-on were accepted less frequently than those without one:

City	With add-on	Without add-on
Delhi	38%	62%
Bengaluru	40%	68%
Mumbai	39%	68%

The Authority also noted that Ola's position was contradictory. While the company stated that the add-on did not influence ride allocation, its app suggested that paying extra could improve the chances of getting a ride sooner.

Further, consumers were not informed that the platform's own data showed lower acceptance rates for requests carrying an add-on or the basis on which the suggested payment amounts were generated. **The CCPA held that these omissions amounted to concealment of material information under Section 2(28)(iv) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.**

CCPA holds advance tipping to be an unfair trade practice

The Authority observed that a tip is ordinarily a voluntary payment made after a service has been provided. Soliciting it before the journey effectively converts a voluntary gratuity into a pre-service payment. Merely renaming the feature from ‘tip’ to ‘add-on’ did not change the nature of the practice.

The CCPA further noted that:

> The additional payment was solicited after consumers had already booked a ride at an upfront fare, which accounts for peak pricing and the driver's distance to the pick-up point. Seeking another payment on account of the same supply constraints amounted to charging an additional premium.
> The suggested amounts were generated by the platform on an undisclosed basis. These amounts increased from ₹10–₹40 in May 2025 to as much as ₹140, while the interface permitted payments of up to ₹499.

Consumers could not independently verify the need for an additional payment, as information regarding driver availability was controlled by the platform.

Making an additional payment appear necessary for timely acceptance of a ride that had already been booked also raised concerns of an unfair contract.

The practice was also found to be contrary to Clause 14.15 of the Motor Vehicles Aggregators Guidelines, 2025, which provides for a tipping feature only after completion of the journey. The Authority noted that Ola continued displaying the prompt even after the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways clarified on 11 August 2026 that such prompts could not be displayed before completion of the ride.

Under Section 2(47) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, an unfair trade practice includes the use of unfair or deceptive methods and false or misleading representations regarding the benefits or usefulness of a service. The CCPA held that Ola's additional payment prompts fell within this provision.

Interface design used 'Confirm Shaming' to encourage additional payments

The CCPA also examined the feature under the Guidelines for **Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.**The prompts appeared when consumers were waiting for a driver to accept their booking. By suggesting that an additional payment would improve their chances of securing a ride, the interface implied that consumers who did not pay could face delays or might not get a ride. The Authority held that this created a sense of fear and amounted to **'Confirm Shaming'**, as specified under Clause 3 of Annexure 1 to the Guidelines.

The Authority further observed that:

Pre-set payment amounts displayed below the prompt anchored consumers to higher figures.

The message **"Generous Add On!"** further encouraged consumers to make an additional payment.

The interface did not provide an option to close the prompt.

The prompt appeared after the ride had already been booked, when consumers were waiting for confirmation and had limited information about driver availability or the likely impact of making an additional payment.

The Authority also noted that Ola's booking data reflected such requests from hospitals, railway stations, inter-state bus terminals and airports. Consumers such as patients, elderly persons, travellers carrying luggage and individuals travelling alone or at night could be particularly vulnerable to such prompts.

Ola directed to discontinue all pre-ride payment prompts and pay ₹10 lakh penalty

The CCPA has directed Ola to:

Immediately discontinue all prompts, messages, pre-set amounts and interface designs that solicit any payment, whether described as a tip, add-on, additional fare or by any other name, over and above the upfront fare before completion of the journey.

Ensure strict compliance with the Consumer Protection Act, 2019; the Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023; and the Guidelines for

Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022.

Pay a penalty of ₹10 lakh.The CCPA has also taken suo motu action against other cab aggregator platforms concerning the same practice. It has earlier passed an order against Rapido (Roppen Transportation Services Pvt. Ltd.), imposing a penalty of ₹10 lakh. Proceedings against Uber and Namma Yatri are currently under investigation.

Consumers who encounter such practices or face difficulties in accessing services can register their complaints through the National Consumer Helpline at **1915** or write to **com-ccpa[at]gov[dot]in**.

The **Final Order** is available on the CCPA website.

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