

T-shirt, brown pants with neat brown shoes, parks his bike by the road and takes a claustrophobic lift to the door. A pot-bellied man is waiting and is surprised to see two people.

"Is he also from Mc D?"

"No. He is from *Business Today*. He is writing on delivery boys."

The man remains expressionless; takes the packet, pays, and closes the door.

On the ride back, Jindal talks about stressful moments at work. Once the customer he was delivering to was drunk and wanted him to come inside the house. "I said I am not allowed to cross the door; he started abusing." There was yet another occasion when he pressed the wrong doorbell at 10.30 in the night. "An older man answered the door and threw a fit, saying he would call the police."

What About Dignity?

It is moments like this that stress employers as well. Delivery is a tough job. In North India, particularly, temperatures can swing between 50 degrees celsius in the summers to five degrees in the winter. It is not easy carrying 15 kg on the shoulders, and riding through potholed Indian roads, in extreme weather.

But more than anything else, it is abusive customers who appear to be straining employees a lot.

"Do Indian consumers understand the dignity of labour?" Sahil Barua of Delhivery asks. "You don't go to the US and have a fight (or abuse) with the cab guy. But in India, we find a lot of consumers treat delivery



RACHEY GOSWAMI

SANDEEP SHINDE: Son of a sugarcane farmer. Came to Mumbai a year ago to find work. He now works with Russsh and makes ₹8,000 a month

DELIVERY AND DRONES

What's going on in the rest of the world around delivery



Automation and robotics is in. Amazon's Prime Air could be the future of delivery; the firm says it is designed to safely get packages to customers in 30 minutes or less using small

unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones. This could be awhile away, but warehouses are now heavily automated in the rest of the world, including China. According to a report from Research and Markets, in 2015 the market size of automated logistics system in China approximated RMB 58.3 billion, up 25.7 per cent from a year earlier.

Do Indian firms match up? They are not thinking drones, at least - jobs wouldn't be lost to the machine right away. "Drones on a hardware technology front cannot be cost-effective, reliable as well as safe at the same time," says Arpit Dave, co-founder, Roadrunner. However, Indian firms are using technology to optimise delivery routes and making employees more productive. They are also automating their warehouses. GreyOrange, a company that manufactures robotics systems for automation at fulfillment centres, counts Flipkart, Jabong, and DTDC among its customers.