

**Première partie de l'épreuve****Are Corporates Doing Enough To Make India Plastic-Free?**

*As India shelves its plan to ban certain kinds of single-use plastic, a look at what corporations have promised to do*

In what was seen as a setback for combating pollution in India, the Narendra Modi-led government held back from banning the use of certain kinds of single-use plastic last week, Reuters reported, citing officials. The move to ban six such items on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was part of a broader campaign to help India get rid of all single-use plastic by 2022.

The ban was seen as too disruptive for industry when it is already coping with economic slowdown and loss of jobs. Even as India shelved its plan, several companies have taken initiatives to reduce and eventually stop using plastic packaging.

Both Walmart-owned Flipkart and Amazon India have been vocal in recent months about their efforts to effectively eliminate the use of single-use plastics within a certain timeframe.

In August, Flipkart said it achieved a 25% reduction in the use of single-use plastic as on August 1, 2019, through several initiatives across its packaging chain. "Our long-term vision is to eliminate the use of plastic and maximise the use of recycled and renewable materials," Kalyan Krishnamurthy, Flipkart's group CEO had said in a statement.

The company said it was moving towards complete recycled plastic consumption in its supply chain by 2021. Earlier this year, Flipkart had also introduced electric vehicles in its last-mile delivery network with an aim to replace about 40 per cent of existing fleet with EVs by March next year.

Amazon India had announced similar plans last month, albeit more aggressive in setting a target, stating that it plans to eliminate the use of all single-use plastic in packaging by next year. "A significant step towards this change is the introduction of 'paper cushions', which will replace plastic dunnage such as air pillows and bubble wraps across its fulfilment centers in India," the company said in a statement.

“This investment in protecting the environment ensures a triple win – it is good for our planet, good for our customers and community, and good for the business,” Akhil Saxena, Amazon India's vice-president for customer fulfillment, had said.

30 India is not the first country to have entered the often-muddied waters of banning plastic. Several nations including developed economies such as Canada and China are taking strides as the noise around pollution and climate change has grown louder.

Corporates may be speaking volumes about the distance they are willing to travel to contribute to reduce plastic-related pollution, but they aren't doing enough, according to  
35 Chennai-based environmental activist Nityanand Jayaraman.

“I don't think steps taken by businesses are enough. Rules that were notified in 2016 have not been implemented,” he said, adding that the plastic manufacturing machine is nowhere close to slowing down.

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