

WhatPackaging?

PrintWeek

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BIG INTERVIEW

Kirit Modi of ICCMA

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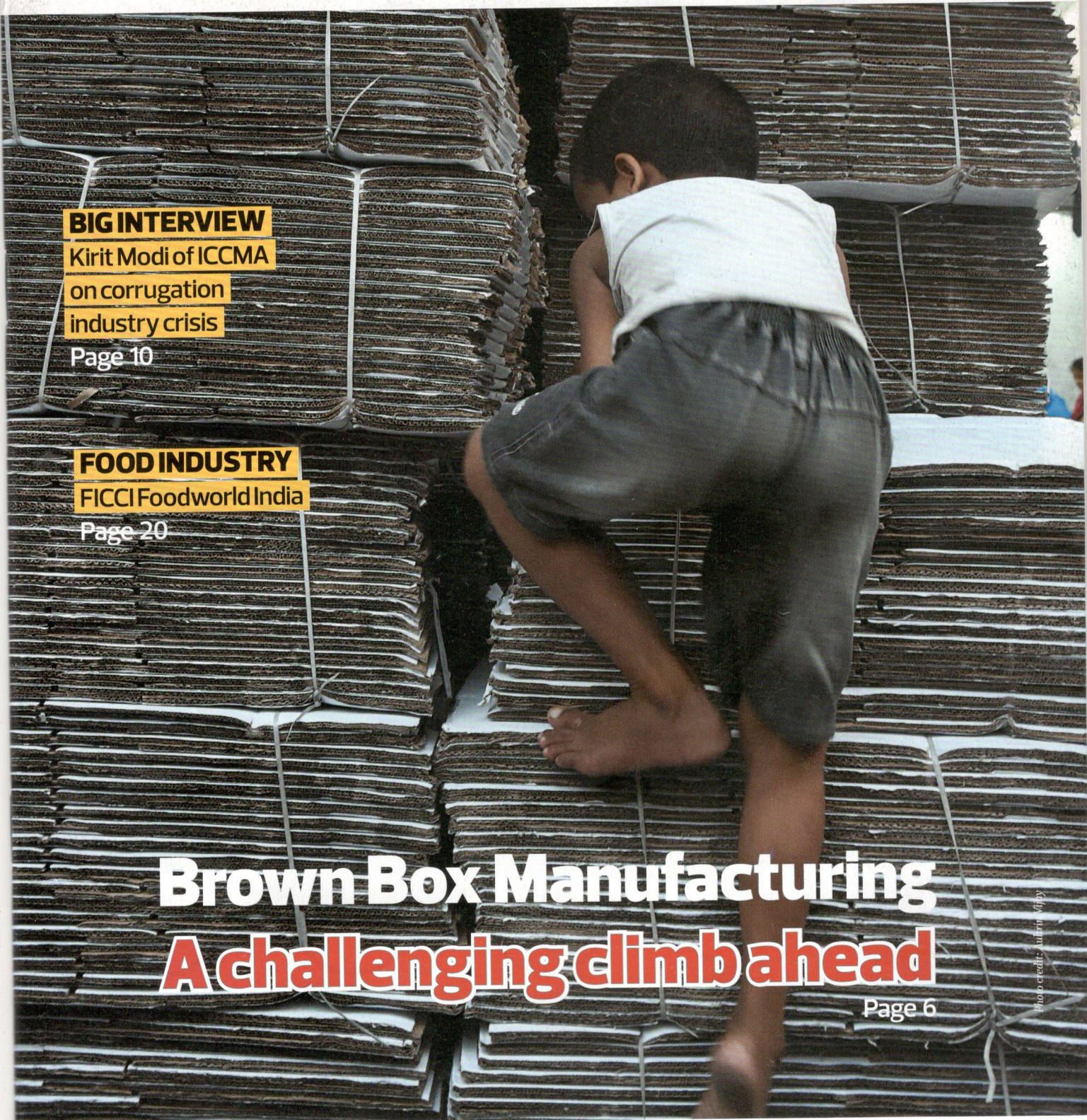
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Brown Box Manufacturing A challenging climb ahead

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Photo credit: Anurag Vinay



WEBINAR

How can India overcome the su

Industry experts address the obstacles in switching to sustainable packaging in PrintWeek-DIC webinar. A WhatPackaging? report

With several brands across the globe implementing steps to switch to sustainable packaging to meet their corporate social responsibility targets at least by 2025, material manufacturers and printers are gearing up to cater to the rising demand for eco-friendly alternatives.

According to a Reportlinker study, the Indian packaging market, which was valued at USD 50.5 billion in 2019, is expected to reach USD 204.81 billion by 2025, registering a CAGR of 26.7% from 2020 to 2025. Packaging experts are bullish about the industry's growth and are expecting innovations around sustainable packaging to find its place in the ecosystem.

However, the pathway to achieving a circular economy in a country such as India has its own set of challenges, right from the cost of sustainability to the recycling infrastructure and the collection mechanism.

Thus, in its webinar hosted in February, *PrintWeek* and DIC gathered experts from various spheres of the packaging value chain to find the answer to how India can achieve a circular economy? The panellists were Amit Saurkar of MTR Foods, Amit Banga of SB Packagings, Amit Shah of UFlex and DIC's Andrew Brown.



Collection of waste is a major concern in India

According to Saurkar, four major problems hinder the adoption of sustainable packaging – cost, product safety, investment on packaging lines and compromising on aesthetics. He said that currently the cost to switch to sustainable packaging is high. Also, achieving the barrier properties such as oxygen and moisture vapour transmission rates for sustainable food packages is still a work in progress. However, with constant innovations and developments in this segment, he feels that India will switch to sustainable packaging soon. He also hopes that MTR will replace its three-layer MetPET structures with sustainable alternatives soon.

Saurkar said that partnerships between the brand owners, the converters and the converter's converter will be the key to overcome the four aforementioned challenges. "Consumers must understand the entire lifecycle of the product and

choose the best material for it. Every decision must be made through the lens of consumer acceptance, brand equity and the product," he said.

Banga of SB Packagings, which

Key takeaways from the session

Mono-material structures are the future: Due to their ease of recycling and post-consumer waste value, mono-polymer packages will see an increase in demand.

Biodegradable packaging needs focus: As waste collection in India will continue to remain a challenge, the industry should focus on switching to biodegradable packaging.

The value of recycling: Recycling plastic and up-cycling it has a pivotal role in a circular economy.

Collaboration is key: A circular economy will be achievable only if the brand owners, customers, government and the stakeholders combine their efforts.

sustainable packaging challenge

recently bagged the AsiaStar honours for its recyclable stand-up pouch with spout, highlighted the benefits of switching to mono-material packaging, as it can solve the problem of waste collection in India due to its economic value. Banga stated that the need of the hour is to implement a holistic approach, as the existing collection mechanism and the earlier established extended producer's responsibility model isn't reaping fruits due to the low value of post-consumer waste.

He explained that shifting to mono-polymer packaging will boost the waste collection mechanism in the country due to its post-consumer recyclability value. For instance, milk pouches being mono-polymer structures have been recyclable for decades and the scrap dealers are even willing to pay money to collect this waste for a simple reason – they are easier to collect, segregate and recycle; and thus, have

more value. "It's for the very same reason that multi-layer packages are not being collected at the same scale as a monolayer," said Banga.

Meanwhile, Shah of UFlex said that the collection of waste, be it mono-material or multi-layer packages, in a country such as India will continue to be a challenge. And to solve it, switching to biodegradable packages and consumer education will be the right steps to undertake.

He also addressed Saurkar's point of the cost of sustainability. "The cost of sustainability is the challenge. If the brand owners and consumers are ready, the entire value chain will support this shift, but the pull has to come from the final consumer," he said.

Andrew Brown of DIC touched upon a range of solutions the company has for the converters that will facilitate their sustainable packaging offerings. He highlighted DIC can enable paper-based packages to meet the barrier properties and pro-

vides materials made from ethanol in sugarcanes as its biodegradable offerings. It also provides electron beam curing technology and offers water-based adhesives, among other solutions. He boasted of DIC's regional technical centre in India, which is constantly researching and developing new offerings to help converters meet brands' sustainability targets. ■

WhatPackaing? view

There is no one solution to sustainability. Whether it's mono-material or single-family-based structures or efficient recycling of multi-layer structures, collective efforts will be required from the entire packaging value chain to achieve a circular economy. Only when the industry collaborates the cost of sustainability can be lowered.

Moreover, we need a clear action plan and guidelines in India on how to best use plastic. This will help the end-consumers to shoulder the responsibility for a sustainable environment.

Experts' comment on overcoming the challenges



Amit Saurkar, head - packaging development, MTR Foods

"Consumers must understand the entire lifecycle of the product and choose the best material for it. Every decision must be made through the lens of consumer acceptance, brand equity and the product."



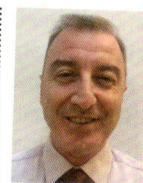
Amit Shah, joint president and chief marketing officer (Flexible Packaging Business) UFlex

"The cost of sustainability is the challenge. If the brand owners and consumers are ready, the entire value chain will support this shift, but the pull has to come from the end consumer."



Amit Banga, managing director, SB Packagings

"Shifting to mono-polymer packaging will boost the waste collection mechanism in the country due to its post-consumer recyclability value."



Andrew Brown, regional business manager - printing ink, DIC Asia Pacific

"The problem with mono-material packages is the barrier properties that maintain a product's shelf life. It will require special coatings to achieve these barrier properties, which we can offer."