



Joint Action Committee Against Foreign Retail And E-Commerce

Working Group : Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal, Conference of All India Traders, All India Kisan Sabha, Bhartiya Kisan Union, Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh, All India Trade Union Congress, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Indian National Trade Union Congress, New Trade Union Initiative, Hawkers Joint Action Committee, Confederation of Maharashtra Industry and Trade, National Hawker Federation, National Fishworkers Forum, Forum Against FTAs, Delhi Science Forum
A complete list of more than 100 organisational members is at www.JACAFRE.org

Traders, Farmers, Workers and Citizens groups decry green-light to Walmart-Flipkart deal – Call on Quit India day for joint struggle against foreign e-commerce

The Joint Action Committee Against Foreign Retail and E-commerce greatly condemns the go-ahead to Walmart's takeover of Flipkart by the Competition Commission of India. Flipkart indulges in gross and widely-reported violations of current FDI norms for e-commerce as expressed in the Press Note 3. These violations are all market distorting. The government has sat over scores of complaints given to it for such violations, and a case is also currently in the Supreme Court. Before investigating and deciding on these existing ongoing by Flipkart, billions of dollars of new FDI cannot be allowed to come in and compound these ongoing violations against India's markets, economy and citizens.

Does the law and enforcement exist only for common citizens, and not for these giant global mega-corporations who can defy it with impunity! This is the clearest proof that the government has no intention to protect the interests of Indian citizens, traders, workers, farmers and service providers, and is only interested in furthering the interests of global capital.

The Joint Action Committee Against Foreign Retail and E-commerce, which consist of key farmer, trader, workers and hawkers associations of India, and more than 100 other organisations, gives a call for all-out protests across India, which will continue till the Walmart deal is disallowed by the government.

It is ironic that the Walmart's entry in retail in India is being passed on the eve of Quit India day! Today also happens to the day when global furniture company IKEA opens its first store in India, sourcing furniture from abroad and killing the livelihood of millions of artisans, workers and traders.

This protest begun today, on the Quit India day, giving a call for Walmart and Amazon to quit India.

In Delhi, a group of street vendors organised by Hawkers Joint Action Committee assembled and marched at Jantar Mantar chanting slogans for Walmart and Amazon to quit India! They then joined a protest by farmers and trade unions led by All India Kisan Sabha and Centre of India Trade Union. Farmers and trade union leaders spoke about the dangers of Walmart.

Addressing the joint protest of farmers, workers and hawkers, at Parliament Street in New Delhi, against the entry of Walmart, Hannan Mollah, General Secretary of All India Kisan Sabha, and a member of Joint Action Committee, and former parliamentarian, spoke about dangers of Walmart entry to all groups and the need for united action.

He also announced the program for intensified joint among all groups, coordinated by the Joint Action Committee, till our demands to turn back foreign retail and e-commerce



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companies, and specifically the Walmart deal, is met. A national convention will be held on the issue on 1st September, along with nation wide protests. Other forms of actions will also be taken up.

Half a kilometre away, **Bhartiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal (BUVM)** held its convention, where trader leaders from 20 states gather. BUVM President **Shyam Bihari Misra** asked for Walmart deal to be immediately rolled back if Indian traders are to be saved.

Separately, **Praveen Khandelwal, President of Confederation of All India Traders**, says, “Walmart and Amazon taking over Indian retail through the e-commerce route will be the end of Indian trading and traders as we know it, as these companies will dis-intermediate the trader. Most will have to lose livelihood and a few who will remain will have to act as petty agents of these US companies”. CAIT will be filing an appeal against the decision of the Competition Commission in the appellate authority as well as in the court.

Shaktimaan Ghosh, General Secretary, National Hawker Federation, said “Hawkers fill the last mile for sale of small products, connecting small producers and farmers to middle and working class consumers. With their micro-reach with data, Walmart and Amazon will also sweep up this link and render millions jobless and reduce consumer choice”.

Biswajit Dhar, Professor at Jawahar Lal Nehru University, and global trade and development expert said: “The entry of Walmart will push farmers, MSMEs and the traders into further distress. The market power of Walmart will marginalise those engaged in these sectors and will result in wide-spread losses of livelihoods.”

Shivpal Singh, National Secretary of India National Trade Union Congress described the threat to workers, “Global companies like Walmart and Amazon which begin to control the whole economy including manufacturing will informalise labour, and reduce them to survival wages. Walmart is known for union busting and extremely poor labour conditions”.

All India Kisan Sabha, Joint Secretary Vijoo Krishnan said, “Walmart and Amazon will make farmers fully dependent on its supply chains and agri services, which is being done to allow government to withdraw its market and extension services support to farmers. This will be the death knell for farmers, already struggling with impossible odds.”

In the evening, **Punjab Distributors Association** held a meeting in New Delhi which also strongly raised the Walmart issue. Its President **N R Agarwal** said, “Distributors are the worst affected and will be first to lose their business with these foreign e-commerce companies coming in”.

Apart from New Delhi, protests on the Quit India day against Walmart entry were held across the country, with scores of people gathering, at Kolkata, Ranchi, Bhuvneshwar, Amritsar, Haridwar, and Bangalore.



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All the mentioned organisations and leaders are members of Joint Action Committee Against Foreign Retail and E-commerce. It is a unique struggle that unites all constituencies against the foreign digital and e-commerce threat.

If this takeover is allowed to go forward, Walmart will join Amazon into a duopoly controlling India's e-commerce. Since offline and online retail is merging around data controls, they will come to dominate the whole economy, and control the fate of India's traders, farmers, workers and service providers. And with control of key Indian data will also control India's society, culture and politics.

Walmart's entry also makes sound hollow the new draft e-commerce policy that claims to aim at developing Indian domestic digital industry and provide a balanced digital dispensation to all Indian groups. There is no point in developing such road-maps when Walmart and Amazon are on course to divide the digital economy pie between them, and control the economic fate of Indian citizens, farmers, traders and workers across all aspects of the economy.

It is evident that the government has decided to take a hands-off approach to this wholesale takeover by global corporations of the Indian economy, and are hand-in-glove with them. It has lost all perspective of how to manage India's digital economy and its digital future.

Evidently, Digital India will now be run by a few US corporations.

But citizens, farmers, traders and workers of India will resist such an abject surrender, and not allow it to happen!

The protest will be intensified in the coming days, reaching out to all constituencies, as all economic actors are adversely affected by this decision.

For more information, contact co- conveners of the Joint Action Committee

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