

INTRODUCTION

For your information we are delivering this new edition of the Newsflash.

Highlights in this issue:

- Side Event ENFORCE, Green Customs Initiative and DOT COM WASTE on the Basel Convention COP13 Meeting
- Interpol Pollution Crime Working Group meeting in Rome
- National Green Customs Workshop in South Korea
- National REN workshop in Cambodia
- Outcomes COP13, Geneva
- Green Corruption
- Seizure by Customs in Sri Lanka of illegal pesticides
- 23 warehouses with deadly chemical stockpile sealed
- The impact of Enforcement Operation National Sword on the recycling market in China
- Shipbreaking Platform publishes South Asia Quarterly update
- Illegal pesticides seized by India Customs
- Vietnam Customs seizes used air conditioners
- BIR: Shifting spotlight for e-scrap
- Inspections of imported to rise in China

REN Newsflash, a monthly newsletter, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities and general news on combating illegal transboundary movements of waste and chemicals, and synergies and linkages on chemicals/waste related MEA's.

REN Activities

Side events COP in Geneva

During the recently organized Convention of Parties (COP) 13 meeting in Geneva, Switzerland the REN team participated in the side event 'Roadmap for activities under the Environmental Network for Optimizing Regulatory Compliance on Illegal Traffic (ENFORCE)' in cooperation with members of ENFORCE and the Green Customs Initiative.

During this meeting the several networks and their specifics were presented. REN presented their work in Asia and the Pacific as a unique network which is mainly focused on enforcement of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.



During the side event 'Development of tools to counter illegal management and trade of waste' the application for mobile devices on inspection of waste and chemicals was introduced. This application is being developed by the European project DOT COM WASTE in cooperation with the Norwegian institute GRID-Arendal and the REN project.

[Participation Interpol's Pollution Crime Working Group](#)

From 15-17 May the Interpol Pollution Crime Working was held in Rome. The REN team participated in this meeting to explain the work of the REN project and to present the current activities in combatting Pollution Crime in the Asia Pacific region. There were two other participating countries from Asia, China and Vietnam. As being a main destination for illegal waste and chemical shipments, as well as many of those illegal trades within the region there is a need for more involvement of Asian countries in such International Networks to combat such crimes.

[National Green Customs workshop in South Korea](#)

At the National Border Control Training Institute in Cheonan, South Korea a National Green Customs Initiative workshop was organized by Korea Custom Service and WCO RILO AP with support of the REN team.

During the two days, 7-8 June, 35 Custom officers were trained on the topics of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions as well on the Montreal Protocol and CITES.

Experts from UN Environment, BCRC China, Korea Customs, National CITES authorities and the EIA trained the participants on the practical aspects of illegal trade in Waste, Chemicals, Ozone Depleting Substances and wild Flora and Fauna objects.

[National REN Training workshop in Cambodia](#)



From 13- 16 June a REN National Training Workshop was organized by UN Environment in cooperation with Cambodia Customs and the National Ozone Unit from the Ministry of Environment, In Sihanouk Ville more than 40

customs, police and environmental officers were trained in combatting illegal trade in waste and chemicals. Experts from UN Environment, Belgium, Cambodia, China and Pesticides Action Network Asia Pacific presented relevant legislation, best practices and included also the topics of Human Rights and Gender equality in relation to Environmental crime.

Partners' Activities

[#DETOX Outcomes: Additional chemicals listed, new partnership on household waste established, mandate given to tackle marine plastics](#)

Countries make important progress towards goal of a safer planet.

Significant steps were agreed upon by parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions (BRS), as the 2017 Triple COPs drew to a close in Geneva this week. Hosted under the headline, "A future detoxified: sound management of chemicals and waste," participants reached consensus over a range of issues at the largest ever meeting of the Conventions to-date, attended by around 1,300 participants from more than 170 countries. Eighty ministers took part in high-level talks on the final days of the two-week-long event, which began on April 24.

The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions share the common objective of protecting human health and the environment from hazardous chemicals and wastes. All three Conventions made good progress on their stated targets of reducing dependence on toxic substances and promoting ecologically sound alternatives to pest control, paving the way towards a safer world.

Read more:

<http://www.brsmeas.org/Implementation/MediaResources/PressReleases/DETOXOutcomes/tabid/5921/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Green corruption More than “victimless” crimes

Perfect accomplice of eco-criminals, corruption allows those involved in illegal activities in the environmental field to make significant profits at the expense of the environment and citizens. Exploiting essential and inalienable goods of the community, the so-called phenomenon of “green corruption” represents a particularly serious form of corruption. In fact, illicit activities regarding the environmental sector pose a major threat to the preservation of the environment and to the health and safety of citizens, but also have a disastrous impact on the economy.

With a view to fill the knowledge gap on the relationship between corruption and environmental crimes, UNICRI initiated the research “Green Corruption – The case in Italy”. The research(1) provides an accurate view on the phenomenon in the specific case of Italy; thanks to the important cooperation of many Italian law enforcement and judicial institutions, it analyses some of the many and various investigations conducted by the main Italian law enforcement agencies involved in the fight against corruption, environmental crimes and other related illegal activities. The research also provides an accurate overview of the relevant legal framework and mechanisms and presents some of the initiatives aimed at preventing and repressing environmental corruption.

More than “victimless” crimes

Although often referred to as “victimless crimes”, the devastating effects of corruption and environmental crimes on the Italian society and economy do not have to be underestimated. The estimated economic loss caused by green corruption in Italy amounts to circa 10 billion euro per year in terms of gross domestic product, circa 170 euro per year per capita income and more than 6 percent in terms of productivity. However, one should not forget the indirect damages including its impact on youth unemployment, but also its effect on the credibility of the economy.

Read more: <http://f3magazine.unicri.it/?p=1128>

Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals or other related highlights

Customs seize 32,000 Lt. of Glyphosate

A large stock of 32,000 Lt. of Glyphosate which was banned to import to Sri Lanka was seized by the Customs Preventive Unit today, Customs Media Spokesman Dharmasena Kahandawa said. During the investigations, the Customs officers had found 160 drums containing 200 Lt. Glyphosate. The stock had been imported in two containers from China by a vessel on March 15 by an importer who was identified as a businessman from Colombo 1, Mr. Kahandawa said. The Glyphosate consignment was declared to the Customs as ‘Non Ionic’ (Organic Silicon) in an attempt to mislead the Customs. “The Customs Preventive officers halted the two containers due to the suspicious name of ‘Non Ionic’. After the probe, the Customs officers found that there was no Non Ionic in the container and that the consignment contains undeclared items,” Mr. Dharmasena said. Later several samples of the consignment were sent to the office of the Registrar of Pesticides Department of Agriculture in Gannoruwa, Peradeniya, which later confirmed the consignment was pure Glyphosate. The consignee

3

was released on a Customs bond and further action would be taken against him, according to Mr. Dhramasena. While speaking to media at the Customs Grey Line 2 yard in Grandpass, Customs Director General Chulananda Perera said stern actions would be taken against such importers of banned pesticides to the country. Further investigations were carried out by the Chief Assistant Preventive Officer G. M. B. Gajanayaka, Assistant Preventive Officers J. G. A. Sanjeewa, S. V. Kamburugamuwa, A. V. P. Nalaka, W. G. C. S. Amarasinghe and D. L. A. L. A. Dassanayake under instructions from Customs Preventive Director R. A. J. Buddhadasa and Chief Preventive Officer V. Minuwanpitiya. Meanwhile, the investigation team led by Customs Director General Chulananda Perera. Issuing an extraordinary gazette on October 23, 2015, the Finance Ministry said imports and use of Glyphosate were totally banned under the Import and Export (Control) Act as it was the major contributor to the Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) which is widespread in the country. The Register of Pesticides had cancelled every licence that was issued for the pesticides containing 'Glyphosate' as active ingredients, the DG of Customs said.

See more at: <http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/Customs-seize-Lt-of-Glyphosate-127490.html>

Hyderabad: 23 warehouses with deadly chemical stockpile sealed

Inspectors of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) sealed 23 illegal warehouses in Subhash Nagar and Quthbullapur on Thursday for selling solvents and acids to chemical factories. About 56 illegal warehouses have been sealed in three days, officials said on Thursday.

Most of the raw materials stored in these warehouses are highly inflammable and could catch fire if the temperature rises above 45 degrees Celsius and a few of them are also carcinogenic, according to the officials of industries and commerce department. The civic body along with state disaster response, fire services, pollution control board (PCB) and police carried out the inspections and sealed the warehouses "The solvents kept under tin sheds and in the

open can easily catch fire and they are risking their own lives as well as those of the residents in the surrounding area," said Srinivas Reddy, inspector of factories, Medchal.

"We have even found boxes of chloroform during our inspection in the warehouse located in the residential area," he added. Officials said the chemicals can burn the entire place in no time. Most of these warehouses built in about 200-300 square yards are located closely. "If one of the warehouses catches fire, flames would spread fast to other warehouses and could cause a bigger damage. The prime reason for sealing these warehouses is to avoid fire. Several accidents have been reported from these areas earlier," said a GHMC official.

The sealed warehouses housed in makeshift tin sheds have neither permission from municipal authorities or industrial area local authority. Ironically, the workers in these warehouses were unaware of the purpose for which they were being used, said a GHMC official. "The workers were clueless about the ill effects of these chemicals and the disaster they could cause, if not handled properly," according to an official from the Pollution Control Board.

The raid comes after municipal affairs and urban development minister KT Rama Rao visited an effluent treatment plant in Jeedimetla on April 15 and noticed several illegal warehouses.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/hyderabad-23-warehouses-with-deadly-chemical-stockpile-sealed/articleshow/58292856.cms?TOI_browsernotification=true

Chinese reform committee considers restricting imports

China may be gearing up to further crack down on waste materials coming into the country, which could impact scrap imports. Sources last week pointed to solid waste language included in a wider enforcement proposal that has

been approved by Chinese President Xi Jinping. The president heads a committee called the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms, which met on April 18 to discuss a broad range of policy changes that could be implemented. According to Chinese [state media](#), the group noted that “regulations should be enhanced to ‘significantly’ reduce the categories and volume of waste imports.”

Information shared by Steve Wong, executive president of the China Scrap Plastics Association, indicates the government committee reviewed and approved prohibition on imports of certain materials “in promotion of reform on solid waste imports management,” according to a translated summary of the meeting. The Bureau of International Recycling (BIR) shared similar information on its website.

Adina Renee Adler, senior director for government relations and international affairs at the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, told Resource Recycling the industry group has learned China’s original list of banned import products is being revised. Officials plan to “update its catalog,” Adler said, adding it’s still unclear what exactly that entails.

Wong, who is chairman of Fukutomi Company Limited, said the meeting suggested “different sub-sectors should develop and implement a ban on solid waste imports through the adjustment of the import directory by categories in order to substantially reduce imports by type and volume through legal, economic and administrative means.” “This will strengthen the regulation on solid waste management for the development of the Chinese circular economy,” Wong continued.

After the meeting, the paper industry publication RISI reported the consideration of an imports ban had “sent a shockwave through the international recovered paper market and through the Chinese industry.”

RISI described the proposal as likely to impact recovered paper imports because of the contamination included in many imported bales. Citing unnamed sources and mills, the article described poor-quality bales coming into China for processing, triggering further scrutiny of paper imports.

Although RISI noted officials have not announced it yet, the article alluded to the ban specifically prohibiting all mixed paper imports from the U.S., Europe and possibly Australia. Chinese producers and recovered paper suppliers “have already got wind of the crackdown and braced themselves for its impact,” RISI wrote.

Some observers are not convinced China will take the dramatic measure of effectively blocking such a massive import market.

“I don’t think such a ban will happen as it would be chaotic to the global recovered paper industry, including the Chinese mills,” said Bill Moore of Moore & Associates.

Information on the current status of the proposals is still scarce. RISI suggested an early June implementation date, but no timeline was mentioned in the state media articles. Wong told Resource Recycling paper imports could be prohibited at various times, but that plastic imports would not be banned until at least the end of 2017 when importers’ license renewals are due.

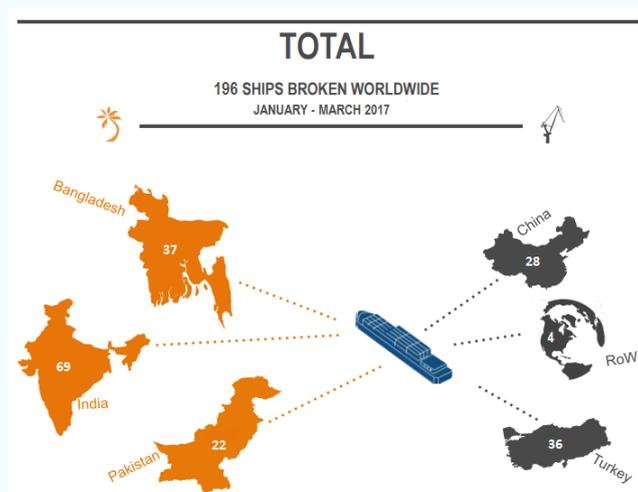
Read more:

<https://resource-recycling.com/recycling/2017/04/25/chinese-reform-committee-considers-restricting-imports/>

[Shipbreaking platform publishes South Asia Quarterly update](#)

128 ships were sold for scrap to the South Asian beaches in the first quarter of 2017 [1]. Eleven workers were killed and at least four additional workers were injured whilst cutting down the vessels manually on the tidal beaches of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Beaching yards offer cheap, but dangerous and polluting scrapping. Ship owners have been aware of the detrimental effects of breaking ships on tidal beaches for more than 20 years, yet the ease with which existing environmental laws can be circumvented for the

sake of the extra profit the shipping industry makes by selling to the beach yards allows the worst practices to persist.



In Gadani, Pakistan, yet another tragedy caused the death of shipbreaking workers. After the major explosion on the tanker ACES on 1 November 2016, another fire broke out on a Greek owned LPG tanker, GAZ FOUNTAIN. The fire claimed five lives and seriously injured one worker. The tanker had already caught fire in December 2016, only one month after the explosion which claimed at least 28 workers' lives on the spot. Another worker was killed in a separate accident, when a lifeboat crashed down from the UK based Zodiac owned SNOWDON. Clearly not enough has been done in Gadani to ensure even the basic security for workers. Despite these recent disasters, ship owners and cash buyers continue to trade vessels with Pakistan breakers – this quarter 22 ships were sold for breaking at one of the world's most dangerous places to work.

37 ships were sold to the Chittagong breaking yards. As many as six accidents struck the industry the first months of 2017 killing three workers and seriously injuring another three

Read more: <http://www.shipbreakingplatform.org/platform-publishes-south-asia-quarterly-update-12/>

[Illegal pesticides seized by India customs](#)

Officials of the Ahmedabad zonal unit of the directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) on Friday said that a city-based firm and its sister concern, engaged in the import of

pesticides and insecticides, had evaded customs duty to the tune of Rs 4 crore.

The firms were identified as Star Chemicals and its sister concern Star Enterprises, with offices at University Plaza near Vijay Crossroads.

The DRI arrested Rahul Dayal, the proprietor of Star Chemicals and a partner in Star Enterprises, on Thursday and produced him before the court of the additional chief metropolitan magistrate, which sent him to judicial custody.

A senior DRI official said, "Specific intelligence was received by DRI Ahmedabad that Star Chemicals and Star Enterprises have been illegally importing technical grade insecticides and pesticides by falsely declaring them as organic chemicals, fertilizers and pigments in import documents submitted to customs at the Air Cargo Complex in Ahmedabad. Based on these intelligence inputs, searches were conducted by DRI officers at the official premises of the importer and its buyer in Ahmedabad."

A DRI official said the agency had also recovered incriminating documents which revealed that the firms have been importing emamectin technical, abamectin technical, chlorantraniliprole technical (pesticides) and azoxystrobin technical (a herbicide) by falsely declaring them to be anionic polyacrylamide, calcium stearate, chitosan powder, fulvic acid, pigment yellow, polyelectrolyte anionic and super absorbent polymer.

Scrutiny of the recovered documents revealed that they were undervaluing the imports, declaring only 4% to 6.5% of the actual value, to evade the applicable customs duty. By such misclassification and undervaluation, they evaded customs duty of approximately Rs 4 crore, the official added.

"According to Section 9 of the Insecticides Act, 1968, any person desiring to import or manufacture insecticide should obtain a registration certificate from the registration committee of the Central Insecticides Board. Star Chemicals and Star

Enterprise have been importing pesticides and insecticides without these registration certificate," said officials.

Dayal admitted in his statement that they have been importing pesticides and insecticides by resorting to false declarations, misclassifications, undervaluation and without the registration certificate, said officials, adding that further investigation is under way.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/director-at-e-of-revenue-intelligence-unearths-rs-4-crore-customs-duty-evasion/articleshow/58651091.cms?>

[Vietnam customs seizes used air conditioners](#)

Authorities in Vietnam have intercepted illegal consignments of hundreds of used air conditioners in three separate incidents this month.

Police action taken under the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes also resulted in a raid on a warehouse in Ho Chi Minh City, netting hundreds of used refrigerators and air conditioners amongst a hoard of waste electronic goods.

According to reports in Vietnam's [Customs News](#), over 300 sets of used air conditioners were seized at Cat Lai port, Ho Chi Minh City, last week in a consignment from Japan. Customs officers discovered 326 outdoor units and 319 indoor units of various brands amongst other prohibited waste goods.

On May 18, customs officers at the port of Cai Mep, Vung Tau, found hundreds of waste air conditioners upon opening an unclaimed shipment that had arrived in April. A day earlier the same officers had seized air conditioners and refrigerators in a separate shipment. Since the beginning of this year, Cai Mep port customs claims to have checked and seized 10 containers of illegally imported goods, used electronics and refrigeration product.

On April 25, police raided a warehouse in Ho Chi Minh City to find it full of around 500 waste refrigerators and air conditioners amongst other banned used household electrical goods. All had been illegally imported into Vietnam.

Source: <http://www.coolingpost.com/world-news/waste-air-conditioners-seized-in-vietnam/>

[BIR 2017 Convention: Shifting spotlight for e-scrap](#)

With China clamping down on unprocessed scrap imports, how e-scrap is handled in Hong Kong and India is likely to change. Presenters at the E-Scrap Committee meeting at the 2017 [Bureau of International Recycling \(BIR\)](#) World Recycling Convention, held in late May in Hong Kong, focused on looming changes to their sector in light of China's National Sword import restrictions campaign. Steve Wong, who serves as president of the China Scrap Plastics Association and as managing director of Hong Kong-based [Fukutomi Co. Ltd.](#), said the National Sword campaign enacted in China in early 2017 has resulted in the inspection of "every container" registered as holding plastic scrap.

This has included containers full of shredded e-scrap plastic, which Wong said are being inspected closely for adherence to a legally mandated 5% contamination limit.

Wong indicated that all containers believed to be carrying shredded WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) plastic are "supposed to be prohibited." He also said, however, that plastic scrap that is reprocessed into a product of uniform resin or colour may still be able to enter the country.

By and large, said Wong, National Sword has resulted in ports clogged with containers full of plastic scrap. Between demurrage charges and increased Customs clearance fees, many plastic scrap import transactions have become unaffordable.

Read more:

<http://www.recyclingtodayglobal.com/article/bir-2017-electronic-scrap-recycling-india/>

Inspections of imported waste to rise

Mishandling of materials can pose threat to environment, public health

Legislators have vowed to increase supervision of government departments in charge of handling imported solid waste, aiming to protect the environment and ensure public health. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress will conduct inspections to ensure that the law on the prevention of solid waste pollution is being enforced. The inspections, led by Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, will be conducted in 10 areas, including Tianjin, Jiangsu province and the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. The inspections will last until the end of July, the committee said.

It is the first enforcement inspection since 2005, when the revised law took effect.

"Our aim is to protect the environment by rule of law, hoping supervision and inspections can be effective in ensuring residents' health and improving ecological safety," Zhang said on Monday.

"We'll urge government departments to enforce the law, and find areas where the law needs to be improved."

The country has drawn up a list of 66 kinds of solid waste that can be imported, including paper and plastics, to satisfy the nation's need for raw materials for economic development, "but problems brought by illegal imports are still serious", said Chen Jining, minister of environmental protection.

Since 2013, more than 400 cases relating to smuggling of imported solid waste have been filed at Chinese customs and nearly 800 suspects have been detained, a statement from the legislature said.

In April, for example, Shenzhen Customs in Guangdong province seized more than 1,000 metric tons of imported industrial waste in 38 containers. The goods from the Middle East were prohibited from import under the law, and smugglers attempted to transport the waste into the country as synthetic graphite.

"Some imported solid waste doesn't meet our environmental standards, while some enterprises import banned waste by hiding it or making false reports to governments," Chen said. He confirmed that a few areas for recycling and reusing waste become "trafficking destinations" for imported solid waste. A campaign led by the ministry against illegally imported waste began in March.

"In addition, we're trying to reduce the quantities and categories of imported solid waste, further reforming management in the industry," he added.

Liu Jianguo, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Environment, said the utilization of solid waste comes with a higher cost to the economy and environmental protection than natural resources, warning that some recycling projects harm human health and pollute the environment. Solid waste can have high levels of pollutants, while the reusable resources are of low quality, he was quoted as saying by Xinhua News Agency. He said there should be clear and stricter controls on the recycling of solid waste.

Source: <http://www.ecns.cn/business/2017/05-23/258601.shtml>

Compiled and edited by Mr. Huib van Westen and reviewed by Mr Andy Raine.
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