

INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to deliver you a new REN Newsflash.

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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

[The Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2017](#)

On 7 September, a high-profile award ceremony was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok. The ceremony was held alongside the Asia Pacific ministerial summit on the environment hosted by UN Environment and UNESCAP. Many Ministers and high-level dignitaries from Asia Pacific attended the ceremony.

At the start of the ceremony a short video on project REN was shown.

Opening speeches were given by Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP and H.E. Mr. Staffan Herrström, Ambassador of Sweden to Thailand.



UN Environment Executive Director Mr. Erik Solheim presents the Award to the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of China Customs

The four winning organizations of the 2017 Award are:

- The Anti- Smuggling Bureau of China Customs,
- The Environmental Protection Unit of Philippine Customs

- The Multi Departmental Mobile team of Myanmar
- The National Management Office on ODS from the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China

The four winning individuals for 2017:

- Mr. Xiaohui LIU, Director General Anti- Smuggling Bureau of China Customs
- Mrs. Enkhtuya Sarenjav, Mongolia Customs
- Mr. R.P.D. Tharaka Seneviratne, Additional Director General Sri Lanka Customs
- Mr. Chang Ryung Han, Director Investigation Division, Korea Customs



The 2017 Asia Environmental Enforcement Award winners

The Awards were handed over by UN Environment Executive Director Mr. Erik Solheim, The Ambassador for Sweden in Thailand Mr. Staffan Herström, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Resources and Environment, Thailand and H.E. Ms. Mithila Chaudhary, Minister of Population and Environment, Nepal. Once again, CONGRATULATIONS to all winners!

For more information on the Award ceremony please visit:

www.projectren.org and

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/pollution-crime-spotlight-crime-fighters-recognized-tackling-illegal-trade-chemicals-and-hazardous>

For information on the Ministerial summit including the Award ceremony please visit

<http://enb.iisd.org/ap/ministerialenv/2017/> and

<http://www.apministerialenv.org>

The REN project is counting down (1)

When project REN commenced in 2012 it initially was foreseen to cover the period from 2012-2014. Due to cost

savings found during implementation, the project and its network were extended until 31 December 2017. This means that we just have a few months to go for our activities. Many exciting things still need to be done and we are also working hard to draft a new project proposal. More information will follow during our planned events.

Five years means that lots of activities has taken place, over a thousand officers trained, better cooperation between Customs and Environmental authorities in participating countries has been achieved, enforcement levels in many countries has improved, enforcement operations have been supported, and tools and guidance material has been developed. Most importantly, the foundations for an effective Regional Enforcement Network have been built. The job is not done, there are many things that need to be improved, and let's hope the Regional Enforcement Network can continue in the future.

In the upcoming remaining newswatches we will show you some photos and short pieces of information from previous meetings, workshops, etc. The first REN Workshop was held in 2012 in Cebu, Philippines and in cooperation with the Asian network.



The first REN meeting in Cebu 2012

Other annual workshops were held in Colombo, Sri Lanka and three times in Bangkok Thailand. This year the workshop is foreseen to be in Shenzhen, China.

Partners' Activities

Workshop for Customs, enforcement officials

Imphal, August 24 2017: Chief Secretary RR Rashmi today inaugurated a two days long workshop for the supervisory officers of Customs and enforcement officials .

The workshop being organised by National Academy of Customs, Indirect Tax and Narcotics, Faridabad in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment & Forest under the aegis of UNEP focuses on implementing the policy and enforcement component of India's HCFC phase out management plan.

Speaking at the inaugural function, Chief Secretary RR Rashmi highlighted the role of India in phasing out of HCFC and HFC substances under the Montreal Protocol.

He also emphasized on the role of enforcement officials in checking the illegal trade of these items taking place from different parts of the country.

Taking part in the function, Additional Chief Secretary Shambhu Singh stressed on the need to save the ozone cell for the welfare of mankind.

Wilson Hangsing, Chief Commissioner of Customs and GST for NE region asserted that the role of customs is very critical in protecting the ozone cell by checking the illegal smuggling of ODS substances.

He asked the participants to be more alert in learning the new technique for implementing the mandate given to India .

Atul Bagai, Senior Programme Representative of UNEP explained the role and responsibilities of customs in implementing the HCFC phase out plan of the country .

Source: <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=21..250817.aug17>

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

China says imports of post-industrial plastic scrap OK, but details remain unclear

China will still allow imports of some grades of post-industrial plastic scrap next year, even as it moves ahead with a larger ban on imported waste that's shaking up the recycling industry.

Five Chinese government agencies jointly released a policy statement Aug. 16 that "production scraps, off-cuts and regrinds" in five categories of plastic waste can still be imported, according to Steve Wong, a senior official at the Beijing-based China Scrap Plastics Association.

The Aug. 16 announcement detailed other types of waste that would also still be allowed, including some steel and non-ferrous scrap, according to news reports.

China on July 18 told the World Trade Organization it was banning many types of imported waste by the end of the year, in a bid to clean up its environment. Industry has been waiting for further details.

Even with the latest announcement, implementation remains unclear, said Wong, who is executive president of CSPA, a member of the plastics committee of the Brussels-based Bureau of International Recycling and chairman of Hong Kong-based plastics recycler Fukutomi Co. Ltd.

"The biggest problem I would see is implementation," Wong said. "Different customs ports have different ways of interpretation."

Read more:

<http://www.plasticsnews.com/article/20170818/NEWS/170819896>

Government apologizes after tainted egg fiasco

The government offered an apology again on Friday for the ballooning concerns over food safety stemming from eggs contaminated with illegal pesticides or chemicals, while promising to beef up a nationwide system to prevent similar cases from recurring.

"I sincerely apologize for causing inconvenience and concerns" Agriculture Minister Kim Yung-rok said in a press conference held in Sejong, an administrative city some 130 Kilometers south of Seoul.

He said eggs from farms that passed the latest government-led inspection are now sold at local retail stores and are clean enough to eat

Read more:

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20170818000465>

Myanmar authority ban 'toxic' cosmetics

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says some cosmetic products illegally imported from neighboring countries have been banned after being found to contain prohibited chemicals.

FDA said Yanhee Cosmetic Set and Qianli Acarus and Spots Removing Cream were found to use prohibited chemicals such as mercury, hydroquinone and metronidazole.

Other foreign-made cosmetic products using Chinese, English and Thai labelling, include Jiaou 12 Day's Whitening Despeckle Treatment Cream, Malaysia-made Itemulawak Day and Night Whitening Cream made by "Zenith Ventures", Mey-Yong Seaweed Extra Whitening and Face Lift and Angkor Cucumber Nano Whitening and Anti-Wrinkle Package were found to contain mercury.

Read more: <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/local/11178>

Port Klang used as dumping ground

Millions of ringgit in storage and disposal costs are lost due to irresponsible parties making Malaysia their dumping ground for unwanted waste.

Over the years, hundreds of containers filled with plastic wastes and scrap tyres – some of which are contaminated – have been shipped here and left abandoned at Port Klang.

Port Klang Authority (PKA) general manager Capt K. Subramaniam told *The Star* that at the height of the problem, the port had almost 800 containers of such waste.

"But we have managed to clear some of them over the years. Currently, we still have 280 containers in the Northport and Westport, which are both our terminals," he said.

The abandoned cargoes, said Subramaniam, are kept for a maximum of four months or until they are cleared by the consignees.

This, however, results in storage costs that have to be absorbed by PKA, amounting to between RM20mil and RM25mil, he added.

Subramaniam said some of the plastic wastes were contaminated with chemicals and therefore a threat to the environment if left for too long.

"The port authorities have to ensure that the containers are sealed properly and kept in a safe place.

"We need to monitor their conditions as well to ensure they don't pose any hazard to the environment.

"All these additional costs are eventually absorbed by the ports and terminals without a way to recover," said Subramaniam.

He said some of the wastes were brought in for recycling by genuine shippers but ended up being abandoned due to unpaid freight charges by local consignees.

"Due to incomplete documents or delay in obtaining documentation of cargo ownership, the shippers are

unable to prove that they are the owners of the cargo, which are eventually abandoned,” he said.

Subramaniam said failure by shipping lines and consignees to obtain import permits issued by the Department of Environment (DoE) and the National Solid Waste Management Department (JPSPN) is also a reason as to why some of the cargoes were not cleared.

“These two agencies are very strict and will only issue permits based on the law, therefore there are chances that the receivers of the cargo may never get their permits.

Read more:

<http://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/06/28/port-klang-used-as-dumping-ground-unwanted-waste-in-containers-shipped-in-and-discarded-by-irrespons/>

Hong Kong EPD strictly combats illegal import and handling of hazardous electronic waste

Three importers who illegally imported hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from the United Arab Emirates, South Africa and the Dominican Republic, and two recycling site operators who illegally handled hazardous e-waste, were convicted and fined a total of \$107,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (August 22) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation.

During the period from December last year to February this year, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted a series of enforcement operations to combat the illegal import, export and handling of hazardous e-waste.

In collaboration with the Customs and Excise Department, the EPD intercepted three imported containers with hazardous e-waste at Kwai Chung Container Terminals.

The e-waste, comprising waste printed circuit boards (PCBs), waste toner cartridges, waste flat panel displays and waste batteries, was found to have been imported to Hong Kong without a valid permit

Read more:

http://7thspace.com/headlines/537125/epd_strictly_combats_illegal_import_and_handling_of_hazardous_electronic_waste.html

Expired pesticides seized in Khammam, India

The Task Force police, led by inspector Sada Niranjan, conducted a raid on a pesticide manufacturing unit at Athkur near Madhira in Khammam district on Wednesday and seized some expired products from it.

The Task Force seized 370 cartons of pesticides of various brands from Elan Agrochem Private Limited unit in the presence of agriculture officials. One person was taken into custody for questioning, it's learnt. It's reported that the unit has no permission.

Source:

<http://www.thehansindia.com/posts/index/Hans/2017-08-24/Expired-pesticides-seized-in-Khammam/321327>

Waste recyclers get new scrutiny

China will review companies that recycle imported solid waste. It's one of several measures designed to reduce pollution generated by the processing of such waste, the top environmental authority said on Tuesday.

The five-month joint campaign, including environmental and customs authorities, will be launched soon, targeting companies that recycle imported electrical waste, tires, plastic and textiles, as well as those that dismantle broken household appliances, said Li Ganjie, minister of environmental protection.

The effort will shut down polluting recyclers, regulate processing zones and guide the green growth of domestic recycling companies. Some measures to ban the importation of solid waste will also be considered, the minister added.

Many companies that process imported solid waste were found to be severely contaminating the environment, making them a major target for environmental authorities.

In a monthlong inspection conducted by the Ministry of Environmental Protection since July 1, more than 1,700 inspectors have checked 1,792 imported

waste processors, of which 60 percent were found to have various problems, such as excessive discharges of pollutants, said Liu Youbin, an official in the ministry's publicity department.

Read more; <https://www.ecns.cn/2017/08-24/270631.shtml>

PCB seeks re-export of photocopiers

The controversy over the “illegal” export of photocopiers through the Kochi port is refusing to die down, with the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) yet again writing to the Customs Commissioner in Kochi, seeking re-export of the consignment at the earliest.

The communication comes barely two weeks after a division bench of the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) in Bengaluru set aside an earlier order of the Customs Department to re-export the machines.

According to PCB officials, the communication was forwarded in view of an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) last month. In February, the board had asked the Customs Department to send back the e-waste within 90 days from the date of its arrival in the country at the importers' cost.

Read more: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/pcb-seeks-re-export-of-photocopiers/article19568023.ece>

Sg Klang turns orange in colour

A change in colour in Sungai Klang in Kuala Lumpur has created a buzz among Bangsar residents.

From its normally murky colour, the river water appeared almost orange on Friday, prompting many to share images they took on social media.

A hotel employee, who wanted to be known only as Ameera, said she was cleaning windows when she realised the river had turned orange.

“I was surprised to see the state of Sungai Klang.

“It is as if someone poured carrot juice into it. That was the first time I saw the river change colour.

“I took a picture and sent it to my family.

“It reminded me of rivers back home in Sabah, where the waters tend to change colours, but I never knew why.

Read more:

<https://www.nst.com.my/actionline/2017/08/273147/s-g-klang-turns-orange-colour>

ISRI asks China to better differentiate between scrap and waste

The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI), Washington, has released its comments to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in response to China's notification of its intent to revise its Identification Standards for Solid Wastes General Rules. While ISRI says it supports the efforts of the Chinese government to protect the health and welfare of its citizens and the environment, the organization suggests improving the language in the draft standard to help properly identify scrap materials that are valuable commodities used as raw materials as distinct from waste that has no value or use.

Read more:

<http://www.recyclingtoday.com/article/isri-comments-china-revisions-identification-standards-for-solid-wastes-general-rules/>

Fumes from illegally dumped chemicals cause scare

Ahmedabad: At about 5.30pm on Monday, locals and passersby witnessed white fumes emanating from an open ground near Raghukul Estate in Odhav. As the fumes travelled towards residential areas, a team of Ahmedabad Fire and Emergency Services (AFES) reached the spot and covered the area with sand to stop the fumes. Officials suspect that one of the local industries might have dumped effluent in the open causing the incident.

According to AFES officials, they received a call regarding fumes at 5.45pm. As the fumes had started soon after rains, they suspect it might be ammonium sulphate or other sulphate-based chemical. "As there are so many industries around, it is very difficult to pinpoint any unit for the illegal

dump. The sulphur content can cause irritation in eyes and soreness of throat if the fumes reach residential areas," said an AFES official.

Read more:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/fumes-from-illegally-dumped-chemicals-cause-scare/articleshow/60266346.cms>

Pakistan's ship-breaking industry needs 'overhaul'

Pakistan needs to strengthen safety and environmental standards for its ship-breaking industry on the face of new guidelines being prepared by the European Commission for Asian ship-breaking industry to ensure compliance with its criterion by 2019.

The European Union move comes after a worst explosion and a massive fire ripped through a dismantling tanker in the Gadani ship-breaking yard last year, killing 28 and injuring more than 50 workers.

"Markedly poor standards are being followed at recycling yards in South Asian including India and Bangladesh," said a study conducted by Ship-breaking Platform, an international NGO monitoring standards at the ship-breaking industry.

With financial incentives to get ship-owners chose EU-approved yards, the European Commission has decided to update a worldwide list of shipyards that meet European social and environmental standards — by this fall — and oblige owners of commercial vessels flying an EU country flag to use EU-compliant facilities for recycling by 2019. On the other hand, NGOs fear those rules will remain largely toothless because the EU ship-owners can simply change the flag of registry of their vessels for as little as €2,400 before sending them off to be scrapped in foreign yards that don't meet the EU standards.

"In theory, it should be very easy for European ship-owners to pick a EU recognised yard, but the reality shows that the vast majority of EU-owned or EU-flagged end-of-life vessels end up for dangerous and dirty breaking on beaches of Bangladesh, India or Pakistan," said Ingvild Jenssen, founder and director at Shipbreaking Platform

Read more: <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/28-Aug-2017/pakistan-s-ship-breaking-industry-needs-overhaul>



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