



“Centre for Environmental Justice research team found number of Chinese and Philippine skin whitening products are now available in many pharmacies and other stores in Colombo, Negombo and other cities.”

Skin whitening cream and soap that contaminate you with mercury

Mercury has been used for butification in China over 6000 years. It is NOW AVAILABLE as the skin lightning/whitening soap and cream in the local market. Mercury in excessive amounts is dangerous as it causes poisoning, mutations and other health problems and also can adversely affect the development of the brain in children.

Ecowaste coalition, CEJ's partner organization in the Philippine found several such products contain high mercury levels, deadly enough to make cancer and other health problems.

According to Ecowaste Coalition that the 13 of 14 skin whitening products purchased from stores in Manila and Makati Cities tested positive under an X-ray fluorescence spectrometer test and contained 550 parts per million to 60,800 ppm of mercury, exceeding the 1 ppm limit under the ASEAN Cosmetics Directive. Ecowaste identified the 13 products it tested positive of high levels of mercury as: Feique Whitening Anti-Freck-

le Cream; Feique Golden Aloe Whitening Anti-Scar, Anti Freckle Set; Feique Green Tea Vital Whitening Freckle-Removing Cream; Bai Li Tou Hong; Maidaifu Herbal Moisturizing and Whitening Cream; Green Cucumber and Ginseng 6 Days Specific Eliminating Freckle Whitening Set; Loreal Paris Anti-Freckle Cream Suit; Aichun Beauty Strongly WhiteningFreckle Series (3 in one); “Special Cream”(double, label in Chinese); “Special Cream”(single, label in Chinese); Yudantang Ginseng and Ganoderma Lucidum 6 Days Specific Eliminating Freckle Whitening Sun Block Cream; Aichun Beauty Green Tea Whitening Speckle Removing Series (3 in one); and Aichun Beauty Pawpaw Whitening and Freckle Remover Series (3 in one)

CEJ joined the global mercury research project

Centre for Environmental justice joined the IPEN to test the mercury levels in Sri Lanka in selected site. CEJ choose the Negombo lagoon and collected hair and fish samples for testing abroad. It was found that hair samples have a range of 0.77 to 4.55 parts per million. The fish did not contain measurable level of mercury. However, this needs more reserach as we collected only one fish species.

Mercury exists in various forms, and people are exposed to each in different ways. The most common way people are exposed to mercury is by eating fish containing methylmercury. Other exposures may result from using or breaking products containing mercury.

The Japanese guideline for mercury in seafood is 0.4 parts per million. In 2010, the National Institute for Minimata Disease tested 1,137 residents of Taiji, the Japanese town featured in The Cove and found mercury levels 10 times the national average. Men averaged 11.0 parts per million (ppm) and women 6.63 ppm. In fourteen locations outside Taiji average levels were considerably lower, 2.47 ppm for men and 1.64 ppm for women, though still higher than recommended. Although testing methods have been criticized the research has raised important issues for this coastal community. (<http://www.opsociety.org/issues/mercury-in-seafood>)



CEJ write to the Minister of Environment to ban PCB importation to Sri Lanka

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) are a chemicals categorized under the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). These are long lasting organic chemicals that cause toxic effects to both human and the environment. In identification of the hazardousness of these chemicals the Stockholm Convention came in to force to eradicate the production, use and the trade of these chemicals in 2001.

According to the research carried out by expertise it is shown that in case of exposure they cause adverse health effects. Acne-like skin conditions in adults and neurobehavioral and immunological allege in children, effects on thyroid hormone levels in humans, liver damage indicated by changes in blood and urine, can effect reproductive organs of fetus and chronic exposure can result suppression in the immune system and a possible carcinogen.

CEJ reserach team found that Sri Lanka still imports PCB contaminated inductors, capacitors and tranformers in large scale. They are use in Flurocent lamps, washing machines and several other uses.

During the last meeting held at the Ministry of Environment on 28th February 2012, it was concluded to act on the importation of PCB contaminated equipments once the Customs Department prove that this is the Polychlorinated Biphenyls.

The figures that estimate the identification and elimination of equipments that contain PCBs are in large numbers. But the first and the easiest method of elimination are still not being addressed. We believe that all needed

is to produce a gazette notification however, months passed without any action. Therefore CEJ requested the Minister to consider this matter on priority basis and

1. Call for a high level committee to consider short and long term needs on this issue under his guidance;
2. Ban the importation of PCB contaminated equipment into Sri Lanka and use of Sri Lankan Harbors as a import export hub for such contaminated equipment with immediate effect;
3. Direct the CEA, CEB, health and other authorities to cleanup the contaminated sites and conduct medical checkups for the potential contaminated persons including their family members;
4. Ban use of old (PCB contaminated) transformer oil in the welding equipment and introduce dry welding equipment; and
5. Implement other suitable measures as per the experts in the relevant agencies

NGO/CSO Global Common Statement for a Toxics-Free Future

The NGO/CSO Global Common Statement for a Toxics-Free Future was initiated by IPEN with input from members and our global partners to create greater awareness about and more effective responses to the toxic chemicals in our food, environment, economy and communities. In this statement IPEN highlight the commitments made by the world's governments at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, and, as Rio+20 approaches, they demand accountability and action by governments for the sustainable, toxics-free future that we want for the world and generations to come.

To advance NGO and civil society organization campaigns related to protecting human and environmental health, a collective group of Endorsing Partners are working together to collect over 1,000 NGO/CSO endorsements of the Common Statement from more than 80 countries.

Read the full statement

<http://ipen.org/toxics-free-2012/common-statement/>

India- NHRC Seeks Reports on Asbestos Exposure from Centre & States

Acting on a complaint filed by Toxics Watch Alliance (TWA), in India National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has underlined that most of the authorities at Centre and States/Union Territories have failed to give reports to the NHRC on safeguarding exposure to white asbestos or chrysotile asbestos. Taking note of this omission, the NHRC had ordered for issuing reminders, returnable in six weeks, to the Chief Secretaries of all States/Union Territories and other concerned authorities at Centre who have failed to submit requisite reports on May 21, 2012.

TWA has sought Commission's intervention for a ban on the use of chrysotile asbestos (white asbestos), which is hazardous for the health of people and causes various incurable diseases. The white asbestos is a fibrous material used for building roofs and walls and various in other forms.

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WHO says there is a definite link between diesel exhaust and cancer- Is Sri Lanka ready?

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a wing of the World Health Organization (WHO), has said that diesel engine exhaust can certainly cause cancer, especially lung cancer in humans.

The IARC has reclassified diesel exhaust and removed it from Group 2A list of 'probable carcinogens' to its Group 1 list of substances that have definite links to cancer – thus changing its status to 'carcinogen'. Diesel exhaust is now in the same class of deadly carcinogens as asbestos, arsenic or tobacco among others.

The decisions is mostly based on the findings of the US National Cancer Institute. This study has analysed 12,300 miners for several decades starting 1947 and found that miners heavily exposed to diesel exhaust had a higher risk of dying from lung cancer.

This is certainly a wake-up call to India which is in the grip of rapid dieselization according to the Centre for Science and Environment based in India. While people are exposed to both motor vehicle exhausts as well as to exhausts from other diesel engines and uses, there are special concerns over diesel vehicles as they release emissions within the breathing zone of people. In a city like Delhi, more than 55 per cent of its 17 million people live within 500 metres of major roads and are directly affected by traffic emissions. Despite recession, diesel cars have clocked 34 per cent growth last year and are close to 60 per cent of new car sales in India. How can the government justify the hidden subsidies to the rich and to a killer fuel? CSE questioned?

Is Sri Lanka ready?

The story is same for Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has not done enough in cleaning the air since the introduction of the unleaded petrol in 2003. While vehicle emission testing programme did some improvements in the air quality since 2008, it is still a highly corrupted system. It does not ensure all vehicles especially the government vehicles are free of pollution. Most rich people uses high polluting subsidised diesel for heavily subsidised expensive vehicles under the permits system under the patronage of politically powerful citizens.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka yet to introduce Euro standards for Diesel. Sri Lanka still imports high sulphure diesel due to this problems. The level of sulfur in diesel in Sri Lanka is 3,000 parts per million (ppm) at present. This was as high as 8,000 ppm in 2000, but fuel quality standards managed to reduce this level to 5,000 ppm by 2003, and to 3,000 ppm by 2004 according to the sources.

However, the standard diesel in Singapore has had a maximum sulphur content of 500 parts per million for several years now. This diesel is described as low sulphur fuels. The new Euro4 diesel has less than 50ppm of sulphur. It is also known as Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel (ULSD). So Sri Lanka has do a lot to achieve this level. However, most diesel in Sri Lanka comes from Sapugaskanda refinery cannot treat to produce low sulphure diesel due to the old technology.

According to the American cancer society, the exhaust from diesel engines is made up of 2 main parts: gases and soot. Each of these, in turn, is made up of many different substances. The gas portion of diesel exhaust is mostly carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur oxides, and hydrocarbons, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The soot (particulate) portion of diesel exhaust is made up of particles such as carbon, organic materials (including PAHs), and traces of metallic compounds. Both the gases and the soot of diesel exhaust contain PAHs.

Exposure to diesel exhaust is widespread in the modern world. Exhaust from diesel engines brings a complex mixture of soot and gases to roadways, cities, farms, and other places. Health concerns about diesel exhaust relate not only to cancer, but also to other health problems such as lung (respiratory) and heart diseases.

Cancer killed 7.6 million people worldwide in 2008, the most recent year for which the WHO has full data. Lung cancer was the most deadly type, accounting for 18 percent of cancer deaths according to the WHO.



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