Occupational Safety (OSH) Rights is a quarterly newsletter on occupational and safety issues in Asia. It is prepared by the ANROEV Secretariat. The newsletter contains information and news about the campaigns of the network in Asia – Mining, Victim’s Organising, Lung Diseases, and Electronics.

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Opinions and suggestions to the editor are encouraged. Please send enquiries to

The Editor
Secretariat – ANROEV
c/o Environics Trust
Khasra Number 177, Neb Sarai
New Delhi – 110068
Ph – (91-11)2953-3957
Fax – (91-11)2953-1814
Email – anroev@gmail.com
URL - www.anroev.org
Facebook - http://www.facebook.com/Anroev

All readers are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions to articles of OSH Rights. In the coming issues, we will offer space for reader feedback.

For any questions about Occupational Health and Safety in Asia, send an email to anroev@gmail.com. Our panel of experts will attempt to reply to all questions.
Asia Network: Empowering People, Creating Safe Workplaces

The ANROEV network and its member organisations are the focus in the Solidarity Center Book Series "Catalyst for Change - Asia Health"

When the multistory Kader toy factory in Thailand went up in flames, hundreds of workers, mostly young women, jumped from windows, trying to escape death. At least 188 workers were killed, their bodies placed in long rows alongside the burned-out building. Several months later, more than 80 workers died in another fire, this time at the Zhili doll factory in China. In both the 1993 disasters, emergency doors were locked and fire protection equipment nearly non-existent.

The twin tragedies became a turning point for worker safety and health across Asia. In the wake of the disasters, a coalition of unions and other non-governmental organizations united under a regional umbrella to press employers and governments to make worker safety a priority. They called their new organization the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims, or ANROEV. ANROEV has grown from a handful of members in the early 1990s to a network of 40 direct member groups from 14 Asian countries and territories: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Its connections with three national networks and several global and national union federations extends its reach to some 200 organizations. ANROEV has achieved concrete successes in addressing occupational safety and health issues as diverse as silicosis, chemical poisoning and asbestos exposure. ANROEV member organizations all agree on the key to its success: Empowering workers and bringing them together in a network to maximize their effectiveness.

Click here for the full report:

Update from Partners

PKMS, India

A medical camp was organized on May 26-27, 2014 in the Bildawar and Haada Villages for the stone quarry workers with the help of Forest Department and Sharam Shakti Mahila Seva Sadan. 180 workers were examined and medicines were distributed.

Most of the workers were found to be suffering from TB but there is lingering doubt whether it can be Silicosis. Most of the children in the villages suffer from Malnutrition.

LION- Indonesia

In the mid quarter of 2014 there were several activity and collaborative works between LION and the Network related to the OSH and Asbestos issues in Indonesia. We begin our story in the mid of May when LION coordinated the meeting between workers, union, and doctor from the university of Indonesia in workers base, Karawang, West Java. In this meeting we shared and discussed with the workers from the Asbestos roof factory. Almost two year we already held the sustainability program with the workers from this base and have worked to collect information on exposure assessment, air and environmental monitoring, and medical examination. These discussions were about preparing the joint program together between the university, workers, union, LION and the Ministry of Health about workers health assessment in asbestos factory. Joining with us in the discussion are Dr. Handayani, Phd candidate from University of Indonesia, from Occupational Doctor Major and program consultant for Ministry of Health, Dr. Olin and Dr. Ina, Phd Candidate from University of Indonesia from Nutritionist Doctor Major, Mrs. Karen Gunderson from AIHA (American Industrial Hygienist Association).
These doctors are new people in Indonesian OSH Network. Their involvement is the results of more than two years of LION effort to build the connection with the experts in OSH field esp in Occupational health field. And now we started to made the collaborative program that involved the workers, union, NGO, university, even the Ministry of Health, to enforce the OSH awareness in Industrial community in Indonesia.

In June, one representative from LION, with one OSH Doctor, and one asbestosis victims from Indonesia, visit Seoul, South Korea, to attend the 3rd International Asbestos Workshop. This workshop was organized by School of Public Health Seoul National University, Asian Citizen Center for Environment and Health, BANKO and BANJAN jointly. In ten days of South Korea visit, besides to attend the workshop, participant in Indonesia had chance to field visit several important place for OSH and asbestos issues in Korea. We visited the Green Hospital, Seoul National University, Busan Committee, Busan University Yangsan Hospital, Asbestos Center and Sooncheonhyang University Hospital in Cheonan City, Dongguk University Hospital in Goyang City, and Institution of Specialized Analyzing Asbestos in Seoul. These visits are very important for Indonesian participant. From these visit the doctor can learn to diagnose the disease related to asbestos from Korean expert, the victims can see the spirit and solidarity from the other victims from other country, and also learn to organize the victims on her own place, and all of us can learn the regulations, motif, and perspective of asbestos related disease in south Korea.
In July, LION prepare the follow up program for the asbestosis victims in Cibinong. Already 5 years past after the last medical screening of Cibinong group. Now we think its already the time to do medical screening again with the same group. And also looking for the other victims from the same workplace. In second week of July, LION also facilitate two doctor from the University of Indonesia to screening the asbestos factory workers for their research that related with the workers nutrition.

**BANJAN annual meeting**

On May 31 BANJAN had its 26th annual meeting having a theme "10 years after Global Asbestos Congress (GCA2004) in Tokyo". We had a keynote on "global situation of asbestos-related disease" by Prof Ken Takahashi (UOEH) and reports on:

- Helsinki International Conference on Monitoring and Surveillance of ARDs by Dr Yuji Natori,
- BWI Vienna International Asbestos Conference by Bro Satoru Takey (ZENKENSOREN) and
- A-BAN activities by me.

Representatives of asbestos victims and their families spoke out too. [Click Here](#) to see pictures

**PTRC**

First Annual General meeting of Workers Health and safety organized on 20 June at BPC Hall Baroda attended by Trade Unions from Baroda, Ahmedabad, Navsari and Petlad. Several suggestions came up on which we will be working in days to come. We will continue working to press for better ESI services and organzie awareness programs in industrial areas. Com. Pralhad Malvadkar delivered first Vijay Kanhere Memorial Lecture. He stressed need to monitor ESI by Trade Unions. He also elaborated how OHSC has succeeded in getting compensation for 700 past workers and 200 family members for contracting Asbestos related diseases for 4 closed Turner & Newall factories in India

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**SHARPS**

Two movies on the story of SHARPS were released;

"Another Family," the movie based on the story of Hwang Yu-mi who died of leukemia from Samsung semiconductor factory, was released on February. One month later, a documentary film that faithfully depicts the lives of female workers who are still battling against occupational diseases from Samsung Electronics, “Empire of Shame”, was released too.

Those two movies attracted attention as criticizing the biggest company in Korea. Although it was very hard to raise the fund and to get a movie theater, these movies dragged a large number of people. After release of “Another Family,” Samsung announced this movie’s content is not real. However, most people who had seen this movie and even Samsung workers found this movie is based on the truth. SHARPS’s campaign could get more attention and cheer from many people.

**Samsung’s Apology;**

In May, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. made a public apology to the occupational victims(though it never uses the word "victims") at its chip plants and promised compensation for them. It was seven years after the death of Hwang Yu-mi, the first publicly known victim, and the SHARPS campaign had started. SHARPS announced to welcome it, but only cautiously, because this apology should be followed by Samsung’s effort forward a sincere solution of occupational diseases issue.

SHARPS’s negotiations with Samsung started on Dec 2013. The victims and activists had discussed what to demand at the negotiation and made an official demand letter with eleven articles of three...
agenda as apologies, compensation, and preventive measures. But the negotiation was blocked for five months after having been stopped at the very first place because Samsung’s abrupt argument that the counterpart of negotiation was not SHARPS but the relevant workers or their families.

The negotiation was resumed after Samsung's formal apology, and since then we have had three negotiations by mid-July. Samsung does not have shown any sincerity to our demand, but we will not let this company disguise people with 'empty' word again. The next fifth negotiation will be at the end of July. Click here for news report; click here for press release by SHARPS

Keep going towards workers’ rights;

This year, being influenced by the two movies and Samsung’s apology, a lot of workers and their families became to suspect their illnesses as occupational ones. Up to now, SHARPS has profiled about 300 workers who contracted leukemia, multiple sclerosis, aplastic anemia, etc., after employment in the electronics industry in South Korea. The majority of these workers were from Samsung Electronics, Samsung Electro-Mechanics and Samsung SDS—the three electronics affiliates of the Samsung Group, the country’s largest conglomerate.

There are also increased number of female workers who have suffered from reproductive problems such as severe menstrual cramps, irregular periods, and miscarriages, even in the traditional climate of society to prevent these problems from being said publicly.

So we still have many tasks; SHARPS keeps working to achieve workers’ fundamental rights in Samsung and other electronics industry.

IBAS

As a result of protracted negotiations regarding a pioneering project in a major asbestos-consuming Asian nation, a substantial donation was made by IBAS in May 2014 to facilitate the commencement of this project. IBAS was also proud to contribute a grant to facilitate the attendance of an Asian expert in the production of asbestos-free technology to the Building and Woodworkers International’s International Asbestos Conference which took place in Vienna in May 2014. It was rewarding to hear about ongoing efforts and future plans to tackle national asbestos issues from delegates from 40 countries.

Discussions continued during May-July 2014 with ABAN colleagues regarding possible asbestos outreach projects in India, Pakistan and Thailand. On July 16, IBAS Coordinator Laurie Kazan-Allen co-chaired the annual seminar of the All Party Asbestos Sub-Group which examined a wide range of issues relevant to asbestos victims including practical support, medical research and compensation.

Cividep

Legal Assistance Camp

On June 22 Cividep conducted a legal assistance camp in Sriperumbudur in collaboration with the legal aid services committee of Sriperumbudur. Keynote Speaker Sriperumbudur Magistrate Judge B. Santhosh addressed the workers in a speech about labor rights issues in Multinational Corporations. The Judge encouraged workers to participate in legal awareness programs such as this and demand their rights vis-à-vis their employers. In his opinion workers should make more use of services such as the mobile legal aid services. These are vehicles with lawyers or legal experts who can be called for counseling of legal matters. The Judge stated that workers should play an active role and demand their rights from government institutions such as the labour department.

The Sriperumbudur advocates union president spoke about workers exploitation in MNCs and the right to Freedom of Association. A female lawyer spoke about cases of sexual harassment and labour standards in MNC factories. She encouraged more women workers to join unions and take a leading role to proactively find solutions to the labour issues they face in the factories.
After the opening remarks the advocates offered legal counseling to the participants. These workers were from various electronics factories of Sriperumbudur. Prior to the camp workers were asked to fill in a form about their grievances and the kind of legal advice they are seeking.

Workers from Chinese supplier company “Build Your Dreams” BYD spoke about the recent strike at their factory and presented video footage documenting a Chinese manager kicking water cans and food meant for the striking workers. The reason for the strike was the workers’ demand to increase the amount of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme that was offered by the company in anticipation of imminent closure (due to lack of demand for their products by Nokia). The Judge asked the BYD workers to prepare a written petition of the incident and the video footage of the manager’s behavior in order to achieve a stay order from court against the factory closure.

Most workers wanted advice about their Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance (ESI) Payments and some had questions about sexual harassment at the workplace. Foxconn workers wanted to know what they can do about the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) they was offered by their company and the labour lawyers suggested to collect signatures from the majority of workers, demonstrating that workers feel the proposed amount is inadequate and then file a petition to the labour court that the majority of the workers are not interested in accepting the VRS. The court will then have to summon the Foxconn management for a hearing.

Occupational health grievances such as loss of sight, chemical hazards causing diseases were shared by BYD women workers. The female lawyer suggested conducting a full medical examination in order to take action against the company clinic and demand the management to have quarterly health check-ups. Workers were informed that in case of accidents the management has to inform the ESI and labour department immediately and further provide medical treatment.

The lawyers also explained basic salary calculations, bonus calculation of 12.33 % and said that the ESI card number should be present on the salary slip as well as ESI and PF deductions. Workers were strongly advised to use their ESI cards and visit the ESI dispensary for free medical examination and medicines.

In the end workers were encouraged to unionize or become a member of the workers committees and to have regular meetings with the management to address their grievances. The lawyers also informed workers about their Right to Information (RTI) act and demanded workers to use this act to address grievances.

Finally, the legal aid service committee members emphasized that every individual worker can approach the district court and file a case through the legal aid services on any labour rights violation and will be provided legal counseling through the legal aid advocates. Workers can also avail services of the mediation centre in the labour court free of charge for out of court settlements.

**OHS Health Camp in collaboration with Occupational Health and Safety Centre, Mumbai**

Cividep conducted a medical health camp for 44 electronics sector workers at the Workers Resource Centre in Sriperumbudur in collaboration with OHS experts from the Occupational Health and Safety Centre Bombay. During the medical camp audio-tests were conducted with 28 workers working in the stamping department of Foxconn, a component manufacturer supplying to Nokia. The workers have to mold mobile phone cases for Nokia (now Microsoft) under extreme noise and have been complaining about hearing problems. Furthermore, 4 workers from Nokia supplier BYD as well as 6 workers from the automobile sector were tested. Apart from that 7 Dell workers were examined who complained about breathing problems.

The tests revealed that:

- There is evidence of occupational hearing loss.
- There is evidence of perforation of the ear drum which could be possibly occupational.
- The noise levels in all sections is more than 90dB including assembly (inference from history).

Follow-up tests will be conducted shortly.

**OSHE Foundation**

**Workshop for Waste Pickers on the means of Organizing the Unorganized**

Two-day long workshop on the Means of Organizing the Unorganized was held on 01 and 02 June, 2014 at OSHE Training and Welfare Centre, Matuail in Dhaka. The objectives of the workshop
were to sensitize the waste pickers about their health & safety issues, to promote leadership among waste pickers at local and national level and also to introduce the effective ways of organizing the unorganized. The total of 22 waste pickers; 15 females and 07 males participated in the workshop.

Mrs. China Rahman of BFTUC, Mrs. Farida Khanam, National Coordinator, LIE, Mr. Omar Faruk, Program Manager of OSHE and Mr. Md. Asaduzzaman, Assistant Director, BRDB joined the workshop as trainers.

In the workshop, some recommendations had come from the participants. They expressed their sincere eagerness to build up cooperative societies in the community. Moreover, the participants highlighted on how they have been playing their roles in workplace and society through their knowledge. The participated waste pickers expressed also their wish to work together to look for substitute workplaces, recognition as worker and other networks through establishing cooperative societies.

**Distribution of Safety Materials, Pure Drinking Water Vessel and Mobile Toilet among Waste Resource Workers**

OSHE distributed Safety Materials, Pure Drinking Water Vessel and a mobile toilet among the waste resource workers of Matuail Sanitary Landfill of Dhaka South City Corporation, Dhaka on May 24, 2014. Mr. Abdullah Harun, Assistant Engineer of Waste Management Department of Dhaka South City Corporation and site manager of Matuail Sanitary Landfill joined the program as chief guest. Moreover, Program Manager of OSHE, Mr. Omar Faruk was also present.

Mr. Harun focused on the importance of usage of personal safety materials and motivated the workers to use these materials. Afterwards, he handed over the keys of water vessel and mobile toilet to the leader of Shawnirbhar group, Mr. Md. Hakim and distributed personal safety materials among waste resource workers.


**“Weekly Study Circle” - Sensitization Program for Waste Resource Workers**

Two-hour long seven study circles were held on 04, 14, 20 and 25 May & 11, 18 and 24 June, 2014 at OSHE Training and Welfare Centre, Matuail in Dhaka. A total of 108 waste pickers; 74 females and 24 males participated in these Study Circles.

The objectives of these Study Circles were to sensitize the waste resource workers about their health & safety issues, HIV/AIDS and the effective ways of organizing the unorganized. Each Study Circle had 2 sessions. The first session focused on the occupational health & safety, identification of core health problems of waste pickers and HIV/AIDS which was conducted by Mrs. Arifa As Alam, Program Officer, LIE.

Moreover, the second session mainly focused on the means of organizing the unorganized and that was facilitated by Mrs. China Rahman.

All participants took part in the program actively through sharing their knowledge and views.

**Health Camps for Ship Breaking Workers**

Ship breaking is one of the most hazardous sectors in the world. Major and minor injuries are the common phenomena in this sector. Besides, different types of deadly substances like cadmium also exist in this sector. From the very beginning, workers are manually handling these substances. As a result, workers of ship breaking sector always suffer from various diseases.

In the circumstances, Bangladesh Occupational safety Health and environment foundation (OSHE) organized 07 in-doors camps on May 02, 09, 16, 23 & 30 and June 06 & 20, 2014 at OSHE Training and
Welfare Centre Vatiary, Sitakunda, Chittagong and 16 out-door camps on May 05, 07, 12, 14, 19, 21, 26 & 28 and June 02, 04, 09, 11, 16, 18, 23 & 25, 2014 at Kadamrasul Government Primary School, Baroaulia Government Primary School, Madambibirhat and Kumira Government Primary School in Chittagong.

The objectives of the health camp were to provide basic medical health care, to aware workers about their health and hygiene and to ensure health services at the doors of workers. Dr. Topon Kumar Nath, General Health practitioner provided the ship breaking workers with treatment. The total of 100 workers received the treatment. As per the prescription, free medicines were distributed among the beneficiaries.

**Freedom of Association under Siege: the Predicaments of China’s Labour NGOs**

In China, the state-sponsored All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) enjoys a monopolistic status and pre-empts the establishment of any autonomous or independent workers’ unions. Most workers view ACFTU as a part of the Government or management machinery. Although they claim to have a membership of 200 million workers, the biggest union in the world, they seldom flex its muscles in defending workers’ rights, mobilizes them in industrial action. In fact, most of its officers are not directly elected, but are appointed by the authorities or the management. As resulted, labour NGOs proliferate to act on behalf of the Government or management machinery. Although they claim to have a membership of 200 million workers, the biggest union in the world, they seldom flex its muscles in defending workers’ rights, mobilizes them in industrial action. Most workers view ACFTU as a part of the Government or management machinery. Although they claim to have a membership of 200 million workers, the biggest union in the world, they seldom flex its muscles in defending workers’ rights, mobilizes them in industrial action. In fact, most of its officers are not directly elected, but are appointed by the authorities or the management. As resulted, labour NGOs proliferate to act on behalf of the workers, especially the migrant labourers in the developed coastal area while after China has opened its market, there are more and more migrant workers without protection and facing a lots hardship in their life. Being perceived as threats to their interests, the labour NGOs are coerced by both the state and private entities, even the ACFTU.

By Apo Leong and Samuel Li Shing Hong [Read More]

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**Publications by AMRC**

**Worker Activism after Reformasi 1998: A New Phase for Indonesian Unions?**

This book intends to bring together discussions on the progress and current state of Indonesian labour movement after the collapse of the Suharto’s New Order regime in May 1998 that brought up the Reformasi. In the context of state-labour relationship, it allows more rooms for workers to organise and join into unions. However, it has also delivered neo-liberal challenges for workers’ collective efforts to defend their economic interests in the workplace. However, the changes do not prevent Indonesian labour to adapt, struggle and develop strategies to maintain its independent organisations. Published by AMRC - [Download](#)

**OSH Legal Resources Handbook**

The OSH Legal Resources Handbook is intended to serve as a practical reference handbook for those legal practitioners and activists involved in the struggle to seek compensation and justice for victims of occupational injuries and diseases. It aims to be a hands-on manual and provide an overview of the working of the law and its implementation. It is supplemented with case studies that give the reader an insight into the working of the laws in the region. It will also serve as a tool to aid cross-border alliances and build strong solidarity among victims’ support groups across the region. Published by AMRC [Download](#)


The demand of Cambodian workers to lift the minimum wage to US$ 160 is fair and reasonable, as their real wages have been stagnant despite their tremendous contribution to Cambodia’s economic growth. The ineffective response of the Labour Advisory Committee in meeting this demand has compelled the majority of workers to strike and protest. The disproportionate use of force by the government to suppress these legitimate protests demonstrate that the government is more concerned with protecting the interests and profits of the employers of the Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia than protecting the workers’ rights to a decent living wage, freedom of association and other basic human rights. Published by AMRC [Download](#)
Labour Rights in High Tech Electronics: Case Studies of Workers' Struggles in Samsung Electronics and its Asian Suppliers

The book describes the struggles of workers fighting for their basic rights in the electronics industry with a focus on the operations of Samsung Electronics and its Asian suppliers, including those in South Korea, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan. It also discusses the overall situation of the electrical appliance and electronics industries in Japan where workers have been hit hard by factories relocations. Published by AMRC Download

Labour Rights and Decent Work for Working Women in Asia - Regional Consultation Report

AMRC launched Gender and Labour Rights programme by bringing together representatives from 28 organisations and twelve countries for a regional consultation. Participants were predominantly women activists from AMRC's partner labour groups, as well as experts and researchers who have been working on labour and gender issues in the region. Published by AMRC Download

Sharpening Labour's Role in Advancing Social Protection for All in Asia [proceeding]

The book is upon of the discussion in the Fourth Asian Roundtable on Social Security meeting which was co-organised by AMRC and the University of Philippines in Manila. The book includes country reports on social protection in Asia, overview on the road to social protection in Asia, outcome of the conference, among others. The book serves to provide comprehensive information on social protection for all from the labour perspective in Asia. Published by AMRC Download

GoodElectronics, Cividep concerned about mass retrenchment of Nokia workers in India

Civil society organisations from India and around the world are highly concerned about the recent spree of retrenching electronics workers in the Sriperumbudur industrial area in Tamil Nadu, India. The trend was set when Nokia India Pvt. Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Finish multinational Nokia Corporation, started to lay off workers in April 2014. This had a cascading effect on Nokia's supplier companies. Now, the jobs of thousands of workers in these factories are at stake. The retrenchment of these workers is taking place against a background of a severe tax dispute between the Indian government and Nokia, as well as the announced relocation of Nokia from India to Vietnam.

Click here for information on Cividep's work on electronics.

Click to read the Civil Society Statement on Nokia and its suppliers in India.pdf, Jul 07, 2014

BWI and IndustriAll conference on asbestos in Vienna issue Vienna Declaration

The BWI together with IndustriAll Global Union at the International Asbestos Conference in Vienna, attended by representatives from Trade Unions from 41 countries, the International Trade Union Confederation, the International Union of Foodworkers, IUF, the International Labour Organisation, the International Association of Labour Inspection (IALI) and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS), issued the following declaration on 7 May 2014. The organisations represented at the Vienna Conference are committed to promote the global ban of all forms of asbestos from the construction industry and from all other industrial sectors; to promote the effective regulation by law of work with in-situ asbestos in demolition, conversion, renovation and maintenance works as well as recycling and disposal of waste; to work for the elimination of diseases caused by asbestos; to promote social justice for those affected by asbestos.

Click here to read the Vienna Declaration.

12 May 2014 Read More

Watershed for Global Asbestos Industry

The news that the world’s largest manufacturer of asbestos-cement roofing is embracing asbestos-free technology marks a defining moment in the global campaign to protect human beings from the
deadly asbestos hazard. HIL Ltd, part of the $1.6 billion CK Birla Group, has announced plans to shift a significant proportion of its Indian manufacturing operations away from asbestos-based products to greener substitutes such as autoclaved aerated concrete blocks and polymer products.

Explaining the company’s strategy for the transition, Managing Director Abhaya Shankar said: “Presently, our fibre cement roofing products account for 80 per cent of our revenue, while the green products make up the rest 20 per cent. We see this ratio becoming 60:40 in the next three to four years.” There is no doubt this will have a huge impact on global asbestos sales as India is the world’s biggest importer of raw asbestos fiber consuming nearly 500,000 tonnes a year, the majority of which comes from Russia.

Welcoming this news, Mohit Gupta, a New Delhi-based occupational health activist, said:

“The news that HIL Ltd is shifting its focus towards greener and safer building products and away from asbestos cement roofing products is encouraging and of great interest to ban asbestos campaigners in India. HIL Ltd has 14 manufacturing units in the country and is the world’s largest asbestos cement roofing company. It is a step in the right direction and it is hoped that the company will completely phase out asbestos from its product range and that more companies will take similar decisions sooner rather later to help protect the health of workers and the public.” by Laurie Kazan-Allen

Callous approach makes India a dumping ground for the hazardous CRT

May 13, 2014, New Delhi: Massive CRT imports coupled with lack of proper recycling policies and inadequate implementation processes have made India its dumping ground, points out the Toxics Link’s latest publication “Looking Through Glass-CRT Glass Recycling in India”, released today.

CRT or Cathode Ray Tube, more popularly called the picture tube, is generally used in TV sets and computer monitor and contains large amounts of Lead. It’s one of the most hazardous e-wastes, as pointed out by the international community during Basel Convention.

The lead (Pb) content that may add up to 1.5-2 kilograms in one piece of CRT has immense environmental and health impacts. Once dumped in landfills, the lead-filled CRT glass leachate, ends up seeping into the soil and groundwater, while when hammered to break into pieces, the lead dust particles may pollute the air.

Health related hazards of Lead in CRT

• Delayed mental and physical development
• Learning deficiencies
• Kidney damage
• Hearing problems
• Delayed puberty
• Decreased coordination
• Shortened attention plan
• Lower IQ

The study is first of its kind in India and highlights the improper recycling practices of the leaded CRT glass. Researchers at Toxics Link speculate CRT waste problems in India may increases many-folds.

The lead and other chemicals in CRTs have alarming health impacts, both on the workers involved with recycling, and the end users of such recycled products. Some of the critical health impacts of lead are — delayed mental and physical development, learning difficulties, hearing problems, kidney damage, and most importantly a reduced IQ. These effects are acute among children between 0-6 years.

“The CRT market is dwindling and still the imports are not receding, this clearly points out toward the possibility that countries are dumping used CRTs into India. If it continues like this, India will be saddled with huge amount of toxic leaded glass,” says Satish Sinha, Associate Director at Toxics Link.

Disposing CRT is a challenge in other countries too, and most of them have strict regulations. The Basel Convention controls the trans-boundary movement of e-waste including CRT, and practice of export is illegal under the convention. The Indian policy on e-waste does categorize “glass cullet from cathode ray tube” as hazardous, and emphasizes consent before import and recycling of such products, but the implementation process is quite lopsided. “A
clearer and more specific guideline will be helpful in solving this issue,” says Ravi Agarwal, Director at Toxics Link, “but equally important is the implementation process of such policies and guidelines, which require capacity building of all stakeholders across the country,” he adds.

- More than 4.7 million CRTs were imported to India in 2012-13
- An average CRT contains 1.5-2 Kgs of Lead
- CRT glass, which contains lead, is primarily being recycled by the informal sector.
- Yamuna Vihar, Seelampur and Mustafabad are the CRT recycling hubs in Delhi
- The leaded glass is mixed with other glass to make new household products thereby contaminating the entire glass recycling chain

About Toxics Link (www.toxicslink.org) Toxics Link is an environmental research and advocacy organization set up in 1996 by The Just Environment Charitable Trust. It lays a special emphasis on reaching out to numerous grassroots groups; community based organizations and the public at large through its empirical study-based information on environmental issues. Toxics Link works closely with all other stakeholders working on similar issues and has played a seminal role in facilitating the development of several common platforms for them on the national, regional as well as international levels. Toxics Link works in the area of Community and Waste, Toxics-free Health Care, Clean Industry, Chemicals & Health and Information & Communication. We work from New Delhi and have our nodal offices in Kolkata in West Bengal.

Apple, Samsung Called on to Stop Use of Deadly Chemicals in Factories

NEWS ANALYSIS: Smartphones need to ditch carcinogens. Could being the change-maker be the best marketing for companies desperate for distinction?

Consumer health and fitness features are expected to be a new area of focus for Samsung and Apple, as each works to find a foothold it can use to advance itself past the other. But it’s the health of the workers producing the components for these rivals’ devices that's begun to gain some attention.

Samsung recently shuffled around six of the seven executives in its Future Strategies office, the Korea Times reported April 30, citing an executive who said the moves would help Samsung better address key issues. These include, said the report, securing parts suppliers for the Galaxy S5 and addressing the "stalled negotiations with leukemia-stricken former employees."

According to multiple reports, workers at Samsung and Apple factories are coming down with aggressive forms of leukemia, due to chemicals they’re exposed to on the job.

Bloomberg Business, in an April 10 report, told the story of two young women who got jobs in a Samsung factory in South Korea “dipping computer chips into the same vat of chemicals.” Neither had any family history of the illness; both died of acute myeloid leukemia. Author Michelle Maisto Read More

Film Release 'Dis-connecting People' by Nokia India Thozhilalar Sangam (Employees' Union)

May 1st , 2014, Sripurumbadur, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu: On International Workers' Day, Nokia India Thozhilalar Sangam (Employees' Union) releases its film titled 'Dis-Connecting People' documenting the voices of workers which has remained muted in the battle between the state and the corporation.

About the Film: Dis-Connecting People (35 mins: 18 Secs)

Finnish Company Nokia Corporation set up its largest mobile phone assembling plant in Sripurumbadur Taluk of Kancheepuram District in Tamil Nadu in 2005. Attracted by the tax concessions offered under Special Economic Zone Act 2005, resource subsidies and an army of cheap labour, Nokia found it profitable to assemble phones in India and sell them globally. In just 5 years the plant produced 500 million phones. It hired over 12,000 workers with majority being young women.

After profiting for 8 years, the company now faces charges of evading taxes to the Indian Government in thousands of crores. Imminent closure of the factory and loss of employment looms large for thousands of workers.

The film documents the voices of workers that have remained largely muted in the din of tax battle
between the corporation and the State. They share their experiences of working in Nokia; the happy times of being 'connected'; of building dreams of becoming 'middle class'; their fears, anxiety and anger of being 'dis-connected' suddenly by the company that they helped 'profit' with their hard work; and their resolve to fight for their employment. Watch the film here click here

For more information contact: Nokia India Thozhilalar Sangam at nokianits@gmail.com/President-Sarvanan Kumar

Chinese Version of “Challenging the Chip”

The Chinese edition of "Challenging the Chip" has finally published. Since the English book first published in 2006, the global electronic industry and its counter movements have changed in certain aspects and scope. However, the industry is still growing at the expense of environmental justice and labour right. We believe that this book is still invaluable for readers.

Book information: Translated with additions by Citizen of The Earth Taiwan

Asbestos Pushed In Asia as Product for the Poor

VAISHALI, India (AP) -- The executives mingled over tea and sugar cookies, and the chatter was upbeat. Their industry, they said at the conference in the Indian capital, saves lives and brings roofs, walls and pipes to some of the world's poorest people.

The industry's wonder product, though, is one whose very name evokes the opposite: asbestos. A largely outlawed scourge to the developed world, it is still going strong in the developing one, and killing tens of thousands of people each year.

"We're here not only to run our businesses, but to also serve the nation," said Abhaya Shankar, a director of India's Asbestos Cement Products Manufacturers Association.

In India, the world's biggest asbestos importer, it's a $2 billion industry with double-digit annual growth, at least 100 manufacturing plants and some 300,000 jobs.

The International Labor Organization, World Health Organization, the wider medical community and more than 50 countries say the mineral should be banned. Asbestos fibers lodge in the lungs and cause many diseases. The ILO estimates 100,000 people die every year from workplace exposure, and experts believe thousands more die from exposure outside the workplace.

The asbestos executives who gathered in the ballroom of a luxury New Delhi hotel wanted to knock down those concerns. The risks are overblown, many said, and scientists and officials from rich Western nations who cite copious research showing it causes cancer are distorting the facts. Author Katy Daigle Read More

Making the European Region free of asbestos-related diseases

Asbestos is one of the most severe and widespread environmental health hazards in the WHO European Region, and is responsible for half of fatal cancers linked to exposure at work. To discuss activities to put an end to asbestos-related diseases, representatives from 16 Member States in the WHO European Region and experts in occupational health and cancer registries met in Bonn, Germany, on 10–11 June 2014.

They evaluated progress made since the 2010 Parma Declaration and emphasized the need for WHO support to develop national programmes on asbestos elimination. The Parma Declaration commits governments in the European Region to take action on a range of environmental issues affecting health. This includes commitments to act on the identified risks of exposure to carcinogens, including asbestos, and to develop national programmes for the elimination of asbestos-related diseases by 2015, in collaboration with WHO and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Asbestos: a silent killer

More than 107 000 people worldwide die every year from asbestos exposure at work. This insidious killer generates fatal diseases such as lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis several decades after exposure.

In the European Region 37 countries have banned the use of all forms of asbestos, following WHO and ILO recommendations. Nevertheless, an estimated
300 million people are still exposed to asbestos at work, as well as out of work. In some countries asbestos is still produced, traded and used.

The most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop the use of all forms of asbestos because:

- there is no safe level of asbestos exposure
- cancer risks are increased even with very low-level exposures
- all forms of asbestos are carcinogenic to humans
- asbestos can be substituted with safer materials.

Open Letter to Asbestos Users by IBAS, ABAN, AMRC, ABREA

July 30, 2014

To: Asbestos Consuming Companies, Governments, Consumers and Citizens

Re: Can You Afford Cheap Asbestos?

Dear Sir or Madam,

Industry apologists argue that asbestos remains an indispensable boon to populations in developing countries who could not survive without asbestos-containing products.

It is true that asbestos products are, for the moment, still cheaper than safer alternatives; however, when you factor into the equation healthcare bills, the cost of lives lost, and costs incurred for dealing with and disposing of hazardous material, the fiscally sound decision is to use asbestos-free materials.

In recent years, we have seen a cavalcade of pro-victims’ decisions in several jurisdictions which indicate that courts are aware of and in favor of claims by those whose lives have been damaged not only by negligent employers but also by governments which failed to take timely action to prevent deadly exposures.

In 2012, a Marseilles Court recognized the culpability of the French Government in an asbestos case; recently a Japanese Court has done likewise. As we speak a case is progressing through the judicial system of The Netherlands on behalf of a Dutch citizen Klaas Jasperse, a former factory worker now suffering from mesothelioma. The legal action against the Dutch State was instigated for its negligence in failing to protect employees in a timely fashion from the asbestos hazard.

To read the letter Click Here

Safety Sustainability

Remarks by John Howard, M.D., NIOSH Director, at ASSE Professional Development Conference and Exposition on June 10, 2014

Just over a year ago, on April 24, 2013, Rana Plaza, an eight-story commercial building in Greater Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, collapsed. The death toll has reached more than 1,000. Thousands more were rescued from the collapsed building. The vast majority of workers killed or injured were garment workers[1].

The Rana Plaza contained five garment manufacturing factories, a bank, apartments, and several other shops. The day before the collapse, shops and the bank on the lower floors immediately closed after cracks were discovered in the building. However, garment workers were ordered to return the following day or risk loss of pay or termination. The building collapsed that next morning.

Rana Plaza workers are part of the global workforce—producing various products for export to countries like the United States—for people like you and me to buy in our local stores.

In the aftermath of the disaster, expressions of concern, sorrow and condemnation were heard from many world leaders, including Pope Francis. Some multi-national merchandisers from several countries are contributing support to care for and compensate victims’ families; worker advocates are trying to ensure better protections for Bangladeshi garment workers; and safety and health professionals from Bangladesh and from around the world are contributing their assistance and expertise to ensure fire and building safety is a priority for all workers in Bangladesh.

On May 7th, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health was pleased to host a meeting in Washington to explore projects to strengthen workplace health and safety in Bangladesh. At the meeting were representatives of the Embassy of Bangladesh, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, the
Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, the International Occupational Hygiene Association, the American Society of Safety Engineers, and others.

**Banned In Europe, Safe In The U.S.**

June 9, 2014 — In the United States, children can drink fruit juice beverages made with Red Dye No. 40 and eat macaroni and cheese colored with Yellow Dye No. 5 and No. 6. Yet in the U.K., these artificial colorings have been taken off the market due to health concerns, while in the rest of Europe, products that contain them must carry labels warning of the dyes’ potential adverse effect on children’s attention and behavior.

Atrazine, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says is estimated to be the most heavily used herbicide in the U.S., was banned in Europe in 2003 due to concerns about its ubiquity as a water pollutant. Also widely used by U.S. farmers are several neonicotinoid pesticides that the European Commission says pose “high acute risks” to bees and has placed under a two-year moratorium. These pesticides — with which about 90 percent of the corn planted in the U.S. is treated — have been identified in numerous scientific studies as toxic to bees and are considered likely contributors to the alarming global decline of these essential pollinators.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration places no restrictions on the use of formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing ingredients in cosmetics or personal care products. Yet formaldehyde-releasing agents are banned from these products in Japan and Sweden while their levels — and that of formaldehyde — are limited elsewhere in Europe. In the U.S., Minnesota has banned in-state sales of children’s personal care products that contain the chemical.

Take the case of GM food. The majority of the British public who hold a view on genetically modified (GM) crops are against them. Yet the push to get them into the country and onto plates is in full swing. Strategically placed politicians and scientists are conveying the message that GM food is both safe and necessary.

Although such politicians and scientists have links to the GM sector, which highlights serious conflicts of interest, certain news outlets report their views uncritically. And it doesn’t help matters that part of the pro-GM public relations assault on the British public is also being facilitated under the guise of ‘objectivity’ by the Science Media Centre (SMC). As with politicians and scientists who give the impression of being independent, the SMC veneer of independence serves to mask where its real interests lie.

The PRWatch website provides some interesting details about the SMC. It was conceived in 2002 and enjoys close links with the British government. It is now based at the Wellcome Trust, one of the world’s largest non-profit foundations. The Trust was founded on the fortune of American-born pharmaceutical magnate Sir Henry Wellcome, whose drug company has since evolved to become GlaxoSmithKline. The Wellcome Trust gives the SMC more than the five percent of annual income at which other institutional funding is capped.

PRWatch goes on to state that the SMC received 34 percent of its nearly 600,000 pounds in funding from corporations and trade groups for the fiscal year that ended March 2013. These figures are based on information provided the SMC’s own website. Its current funders include BASF, Bayer, and Syngenta, three of the world’s biggest pesticide and GMO corporations, as well as a number of agrichemical trade groups likeCropLife International.

By Colin Todhunter, May 9, 2014 : Read More

**Scientists for sale: The way multinationals 'buy' endorsements**

While mouthing platitudes about democracy and democratic institutions, this type of corporate colonisation demonstrates a sneering contempt for democracy and by implication for ordinary people.
Tributes

Shantaben Khushalbhai Parmar - aged 55 died on 7-Aug-2014 due to Silicosis. In December 2011 she lost her eldest son Raju at the age of 35 who was suffering from Silicosis.

On July 4 we lost Karima Rashidbhai Malek, Bashir Malek ultimately lost his struggle with Silicosis on 5 Aug.

Bashirmiya Belim died due to Silicosis in Gujarat on 22nd June, 2014.

Arvind Parmar died due to Silicosis in Gujarat on 10th June, 2014.

Regional News

$90.5 million awarded to 11 Manville families who lost members to asbestos-related cancer

NEW BRUNSWICK — A judge in New Brunswick has awarded 11 families from Manville more than $90 million for their pain and suffering caused by losing loved ones to an asbestos-related cancer.

After a week of hearings, Superior Court Judge Ana Viscomi issued her ruling today, awarding the families $90.5 million, to be paid by Anova Holding, AG, and Becon, AG, the companies that supplied asbestos to Johns Manville from the 1950’s into the 1980’s, according to attorney Lea Kagan with Levy Konigsberg, one of two law firms that represented the families. The other was Szaferman Lakind.

Kagan said the lawsuits stem from the mesothelioma-related deaths of 11 people, including a mother and daughter. Mesothelioma is an aggressive cancer of the lungs that is linked to asbestos exposure.

She said the lawsuits were filed between 2008 and 2011, but the legal process lasted as long as it did because the two defendant companies are foreign. Both are based in Switzerland.

Kagan said neither Anova nor Becon appeared or answered the complaints filed against them. She said the families sought and obtained default judgments against the companies, leading to hearings in New Brunswick to determine damages.

They lied to me for 15 years of my life, says asbestosis-afflicted labourer

During a Diwali break from his hectic factory work last year, 34-year-old Yogesh Sawant suddenly woke up from sleep and mumbled to his wife: ‘Ata Mala He Nahi Karaicha Ahe’ (I don’t want to do this work anymore).

When this happened, Sawant, who was working as a labourer in Ashadeep Frictions Ltd at Ambernath, had been undergoing tests for chest pain and breathing problems. Little did he know what was in store for him in the months to come. While the factory management and its medical team kept assuring him there was no cause for worry, Sawant kept exposing himself to the deadly asbestos dust in the factory loom.
“The management and their medical staff kept saying there was no cause for worry as test after test came back negative for occupational diseases. But, at some point, he was convinced there was something fishy about the factory work he was doing,” Sawant’s wife Sarala said, with a faraway look in her eyes, sitting in their tiny home at Maralgaon in Kalyan.

Soon Pawar himself chips in, but stumbles over the word asbestosis. “I don’t even know how to pronounce it (asbestosis). For 15 years, I worked in that factory but nobody bothered to even tell me what I was dealing with,” he said.

The family was in for a rude shock when a team of experts from the Union Ministry of Labour descended on their home towards the end of last year and made Sawant undergo X-ray scans and blood tests. Two workers from the factory: Sawant and Manoj Saroj turned out to be the first confirmed cases of the deadly asbestosis disease in Maharashtra. Read More

Articles on Asbestos Issue on IBAS website

Asbestos and The World Cup 2014 by Laurie Kazan-Allen

When the 2014 Football World Cup was awarded to Brazil, ban asbestos campaigners in Brazil and abroad had serious concerns about whether asbestos would be used in the construction of the venues and ancillary buildings. Brazil is the world’s fourth largest producer of chrysotile asbestos and this substance, acknowledged to be a human carcinogen, is commonly used throughout the country in construction materials. Fortunately, these products were not deemed appropriate for these large infrastructure projects and, according to a well-informed source in Brazil, asbestos was not used to build the stadiums.

This, it turned out was, however, only a small part of the problem. In order to build twelve stadiums in Manaus, Fortaleza, Natal, Recife, Salvador, Brasilia, Cuiabá, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Rio de Janerio, Curitiba and Porto Alegre, the authorities sanctioned the demolition of houses in poor neighbourhoods in targeted areas. Asbestos-containing products such as roofing tiles, water tanks and sheeting, were omnipresent in the favelas. Despite six state laws and resolutions mandating measures to minimize the asbestos hazards caused by such demolition and the classification of the resulting waste as toxic, no particular attention was paid or guidance given by the government, the Brazilian football authorities or FIFA to the hazards being created. Read More

Unions Call for Asbestos Ban by Laurie Kazan-Allen

In 1989, the International Federation of Building and Woodworkers – now the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) – issued a global call for an end to asbestos use. Since then, the BWI has been at the forefront of global efforts to implement the transition from policies based on the “controlled use of asbestos” to those based on no use. On May 6 & 7, 2014, the latest manifestation of the union’s continued engagement with this issue took place in the Austrian capital when more than one hundred delegates from forty countries were brought together for the: International Asbestos Conference.

Austrian trade unions – the construction union Die Gewerkschaft Bau-Holz (GBH) and Die Produktionsgewerkschaft (PRO-GE) – facilitated the gathering which took place at union premises in Vienna. The event was organized by the BWI in collaboration with the Industriall Global Union, the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat. It did not go unnoticed that this high-profile meeting took place on the anniversary of the 2013 Rotterdam Convention debacle which saw a Russian-led cabal obstruct the enactment of United Nations proposals to regulate the global trade in asbestos.

The agenda of the two-day conference reflected the international dichotomy whereby asbestos use is banned throughout the developed world but remains legal in industrializing economies. A wide range of topics was covered by frontline activists and world-class experts with time built into the agenda to allow for discussions and strategy planning. The exchange of information was enabled by the provision of translation into English, French, Spanish, German, Japanese and Korean. Multilingual educational material made available to delegates included copies of the 2014 “Asbestos is a Killer” booklets published by the BWI and Industriall in English, Spanish, French and Russian as well as asbestos training material for at-risk
workers produced by the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers.

**Award for Latin American Activist: Fernanda Giannasi** by Laurie Kazan-Allen

On May 7, 2014 at a prestigious ceremony in an iconic Brazilian museum in São Paulo, the work of veteran ban asbestos activist and former labor inspector Fernanda Giannasi was publicly commemorated when she was presented with an award for excellence by the editors of CIPA Magazine, a widely read publication focusing on issues related to occupational health and safety.

The recipients of the “Premio Destaque Award 2014” were nominated and voted for by CIPA’s readers with the final selection being made by occupational safety and health professionals.1

The choice of venue for this celebration was ironic given that when the museum was due to reopen after extensive refurbishment some years ago, an art installation was interdicted by Ms. Giannasi as it contained corrugated asbestos sheeting. After heated debates with the curator of the exhibition, the set designer and the museum, the contaminated material was replaced with asbestos-free alternatives and the toxic debris transported to a landfill for hazardous waste. The photographs below from Ms. Giannasi’s archive show the remediation work undertaken at the museum to eliminate the contamination.

**Japanese Mobilize for Asbestos Justice** by Laurie Kazan-Allen

On the afternoon of Thursday, May 15, 2014 more than five thousand people took part in an outdoor meeting and rally in support of asbestos-injured construction workers. The date chosen was significant as it was the day when cases were filed with the Tokyo and Yokohama District Courts in the second wave of what has become known as the “metropolitan asbestos litigation.”

The theme for this the 9th AMD, was to demand the insurance companies fund research into treatment and a cure for mesothelioma. Over 9 years the Greater Manchester Asbestos Victims Support Group has raised over £100,000 for mesothelioma research. Barbara Eason spoke of her husband Michael’s death and her long involvement in the Greater Manchester Asbestos Victims Support Group and her passionate support for a mesothelioma cure. Local MPs Debbie Abrahams, Kate Green, Lucy Powell, Lisa Nandy, Mike Kane, Simon Danckuk, spoke in support of the day, and all remembered Paul Goggins MP who sadly died in January and pledged to continue his valiant campaign for mesothelioma sufferers.

**Manchester’s Action Mesothelioma Day 2014** by Hilda Palmer

It was a fantastic Action on Mesothelioma Day (AMD) event in Manchester’s Albert Square today (July 4, 2014)! Despite the rain, hundreds of people came to hear nine local MPs and Lorraine Creech, Mesothelioma Nurse Specialist, speak and see white doves released as a symbol of hope for the future.

The crowd was addressed by trade unions officials, asbestos victims’ representatives and politicians from both the ruling and opposition parties. To date, 270 of the members of the national diet (nearly 40%) have signed a petition supporting the plaintiffs’ demands. Speaking on behalf of The Ban Asbestos Network of Japan (BanJan) Sugio Furuya expressed BanJan’s support for the injured saying:

“The plaintiffs’ demands are an apology, compensation for asbestos victims and their families and the elimination of asbestos-related diseases. They are demanding political action be taken to set up a special compensation fund for asbestos victims in the construction sector which will be funded by the government and asbestos product manufacturers. The litigation process is a long one and many of these claimants will not live to see the final judgment. That is why government action is needed now so that the injured and their families receive the support they deserve.”

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The 160+ asbestos claimants, who included injured workers and the families of deceased workers, alleged that the Japanese government as well as asbestos product manufacturers were responsible for their injuries. Plaintiffs included members and former members of the Tokyo, Kanagawa and Saitama branches of Zenkensoren, the National Federation of Construction Workers Unions. Similar lawsuits are pending in Sapporo, Kyoto, Osaka and Fukuoka. The litigants are seeking recognition, compensation and the establishment of a nationwide asbestos program to prevent hazardous exposures.

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MP Andy Burnham Shadow Health Secretary pledged to pursue compensation justice for mesothelioma sufferers and to make funding for research for a mesothelioma cure a reality if Labour is elected next year, and to continue to work for mesothelioma sufferers. Read More

Tackling Asbestos Injustice in Korea by Yeyong Choi, Director of Asian Citizen’s Center for Environment and Health and Member of the Ban Asbestos Network of Korea (BANKO)

On Tuesday, July 22, 2014, a new initiative was mounted in the plaza in front of Seoul City Hall to raise awareness of the asbestos hazard amongst construction workers who constitute the vast majority of people diagnosed with asbestos-related diseases in Korea and elsewhere. The three-hour afternoon event to publicize asbestos injustices experienced by construction workers was organized by BANKO in collaboration with the School of Public Health of Seoul National University and the Korean construction trade union.

The event attracted more than 30,000 union members who heard calls for the introduction of new laws, improved working conditions and salary uplifts for people working in the construction industry. Read More

Thai Ban Asbestos Struggle 2014 by Laurie Kazan-Allen

Three years ago the Thai Cabinet approved a ban asbestos resolution. Unfortunately, since that time, domestic asbestos stakeholders, in collaboration with Russian industry lobbyists, have forestalled progress in implementing legislation required to affect this much-needed public safety measure.

Last Saturday (August 3, 2014), a meeting organized by the Thai Ban Asbestos Network (T-BAN) was held at Bangkok’s Kasetart University. Speakers discussed the reasons for the delay and highlighted internal government dynamics which had support for the ban from the Ministry of Health and opposition from the Ministry of Industry (MOI). According to T-BAN representative Mrs. Somboon Seekamdokkae, the MOI was advocating a five-year delay with no date for when prohibitions should start (see: T-BAN Press Release). Professor Dr. Surasak Buranatreeweth from the Faculty of Medicine, Thammasat University reiterated the global consensus that all asbestos should be banned citing positions taken by leading international agencies and bodies tasked with protecting public and occupational health. On August 16, 2014, T-BAN members will again discuss these issues with MOI representatives.

August 6, 2014

Occupational Disease Outreach Project in India by Mohit Gupta

The Rajasthan Majdoor Panchayat Sangh and the Occupational Health and Safety Association, Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Occupational Health and Safety Centre, Mumbai and the Occupational and Environmental Health Network of India held a two-day Diagnosis Camp in Rajasthan State in western India on June 19-20, 2014.

The medical camp was in Nithua, Udaipur and was organized to screen mine and quarry workers for cases of silicosis. Many of the people examined had worked in the stone quarries in and around the village. These quarries produce a soap stone which is crushed to make powder used in various industries. It has been established that the soap stone mined at this location is contaminated with asbestos. This initiative was supported by the Global Greengrant Fund.

One hundred and seventy-four individuals were examined by the medical staff which included a nurse and a doctor assisted by a helper who carried out the following tests: lung function test, blood oxygen spirometry, blood pressure monitoring, X-ray examination and clinical examination for each individual. Read More

Labor Activist Who Chose to Work Within the System Is Outsider Once More, and Again Crusading for Job Safety

After decades of speaking out against workplace hazards in this country and abroad, Garrett Brown didn’t quietly fade away when he retired from his high-ranking state regulatory job in California. He came back to hound his former employer.
Garrett Brown, as a college student in 1975, supporting a grape boycott promoted by the United Farm Workers union.

Brown released a blistering critique of the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health just weeks after leaving the agency at the end of last year. The report is the core of a watchdog group’s federal complaint trying to prod Cal/OSHA, as the agency is known, to add field inspectors and step up enforcement.

Then, in April, Brown lodged a whistleblower claim with the state auditor. In it he accuses the department that oversees Cal/OSHA of “improperly,” and “possibly illegally,” misusing money that is supposed to go to his former agency. And this month Brown launched a website, Inside Cal/OSHA, to step up his criticism of what he regards as the pro-employer drift of the agency.

Brown’s unconventional farewell after 20 years at Cal/OSHA, where he was a respected inspector before being named special assistant to the agency’s chief, was hardly out of character. Brown, 61, has been both a crusader and a buttoned-down career bureaucrat. After starting out as an activist, he came to the agency willing to work for change within the system. Yet over the years he riled his

own bosses by publicly calling for more staff, arguing that the state has more fish and game wardens than job safety inspectors. Read More

**Joint checkups to spot asbestos caused lung diseases**

The Environment Ministry will launch a model project for conducting asbestos-related lung-disease checkups in fiscal 2015 with municipalities conducting lung cancer screenings, sources said.

The ministry will ask municipalities that once hosted asbestos-linked plants to participate and will earmark funds for the budget, the sources said Saturday. Fiscal 2015 begins in April 2015.

Production and use of asbestos is banned because the material can cause lung cancer or mesothelioma when inhaled. Such problems prompted the ministry in fiscal 2006 to conduct health surveys in seven regions where such plants were located, including Amagasaki, Hyogo Prefecture. Read More

**Kobe court rules criteria for recognizing asbestos-related lung cancer unreasonable**

KOBE -- The Kobe District Court on May 12 dismissed a 2009 decision from a local labor standards inspection office that had determined that a 60-year-old construction worker’s lung cancer was not caused by asbestos exposure at his workplace.

The 57-year-old wife of the man who died of lung cancer in March 2008 appealed to the court to overturn the Kobe Nishi Labor Standards Inspection Office’s decision which rejected her claim that the man’s death was caused by a work-related illness as he had fewer asbestos particles in his body than the level set by the government.

The criteria set by the government in 2007 states that lung cancer should be recognized as a work-related illness if the patient concerned was engaged in work in which they were exposed to asbestos for at least 10 years and if their lungs contain at least 5,000 asbestos particles per gram of lung tissue.

According to the May 12 ruling, the man had worked at construction sites as a carpenter from 1967 to 2003. In August 2009, the Kobe Nishi Labor
Standards Inspection Office rejected the man's disease as a work-related illness because the number of asbestos particles in his lungs was only 918.

Presiding Judge Ryoji Kudo ruled the government-set criteria for recognizing asbestos-related illnesses based on the number of asbestos bodies is unreasonable, pointing out that the man had mainly inhaled a type of asbestos that does not easily form asbestos particles. The judge said the fact that the man had nearly 1,000 asbestos particles in his lung tissue - far greater than the figure found in a member of the general public - merited recognition that he had developed lung cancer as a result of his working environment.

Asbestos on ships

NINE of the 365 vessels surveyed by the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji were found to have asbestos in them however, tests of the asbestos are below 0.01ml and considered safe.

The tests were carried out by an asbestos technical team made up of officials from MSAF, the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Health.

"The asbestos monitoring on vessels was a nationwide exercise with no individual vessel singled out for this testing and monitoring exercise," MSAF said yesterday. "Two tests were carried out in this exercise — a dust test and an air test."

Dust tests were carried out where lagging or false ceilings were tested for asbestos flakes.

If the tests came back positive, an air sampling of dust measurement would then be carried out to provide a more complete assessment of the ambient conditions on board.

"The asbestos testing was carried out in accordance with the IMO guidelines."

MSAF said the nine vessels that tested positive amounted to 2.2 per cent of the total vessels inspected.

"The Ministry of Labour received the certificate of analysis from Australia on the level of ACMs, wherein it was confirmed that the results of the nine vessels tested identified that the concentration of the ACMs was less than 0.01ml."

"This was deemed to be negligible and considered safe. Therefore, although the result is negligible and considered safe, vessel owners are still required to continue with the control measures stipulated in the IMO Guidelines to eliminate or minimise exposure and prevent further release of asbestos." Author Tevita Vuibau Monday, June 16, 2014

Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency - community languages leaflet

The Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency has now made available information leaflets in community languages. These leaflets outline the agency, the work it will carry out and information about the dangers of asbestos. Languages available are

Arabic / Chinese simplified / Chinese traditional / Filipino / Greek / Hindi / Italian / Persian (Farsi) / Portuguese / Spanish / Thai / Turkish / Vietnamese

Mesothelioma in UK

HSE, UK announced new figures for mesothelioma which showed a 11% increase in deaths in just one year. The details below are from the HSE website

Most mesothelioma deaths occurring now are a legacy of past occupational exposures to asbestos when it was widely used in the building industry.

The latest information shows:

- The number of mesothelioma deaths increased to 2,535 in 2012 from 2,291 in 2011. This was largely due to an increase in male deaths aged 65 years or more (Mesothelioma register).
- In 2012 there were 2,126 male deaths and 409 female deaths.
- The number of new cases of mesothelioma assessed for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit has increased from 1,985 in 2011 to 2,125 new cases in 2012 (IIDB).
- Men who worked in the building industry when asbestos was used extensively are now among those most at risk of mesothelioma

Mesothelioma in Great Britain: annual deaths, IIDB cases and projected future deaths to 2030
Commonwealth Games asbestos alert: Shock as toxic substance is found dumped on pathway near athletes’ village

Just weeks before the Games get underway one of Scotland’s leading asbestos experts says the affected area, near the multi-million pound athletes’ village, must be sealed off before an inspection can take place.

KILLER asbestos has been found dumped near the Commonwealth Games Village on the banks of the Clyde.

A horrified cyclist made the shock discovery as he used a busy riverside walkway near the multi-million-pound village – touted as the jewel in the crown of the east end of Glasgow’s regeneration.

Just weeks before the Games kick off, one of Scotland’s leading experts on the deadly substance said the site must be completely sealed off before specialists inspect the entire area.

Industrial hygienist Robin Howie – who has been involved as an expert in more than 400 legal claims – confirmed the material was asbestos cement.

Games officials said the toxic material must have been flytipped. They added tests had confirmed there was no asbestos in the village, which will house 6500 athletes and officials.

Howie said: “It is asbestos cement which looks as though it has been flytipped there.

“The site needs to be fully sealed off and then the process starts of sifting through rubble to find the rest of this material. When you find some asbestos, you can be sure there is more lying around.

“It is incredibly dangerous and unpleasant. The effects of asbestos-related diseases are untreatable and can take 20 years to appear.

Author Keith McLeod, Stephen Stewart Read More

Silent killer

Asbestos-related deaths are currently rising in Europe and North America as a result of historical Asbestos exposure. Unless preventative actions are immediately taken by people living and working in the Middle East, this region will face the same grave future.

Over the past five years, I have encountered various types of Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACMs) installed in new buildings on numerous occasions – some as recently as 2013.

The sites are wide-ranging – from multi-million dollar power stations to the ‘closer to home’ office blocks, residential accommodation, and even two brand new schools. Asbestos prohibitions are present within most Middle Eastern countries, however, the reality is that a state-wide ban on ACMs is not an effective guarantee that Asbestos won’t make its way into a new construction project.

Legislation relating to the management of ACMs in the region is gradually improving, although enforcement and effective prohibitions or penalties are still lacking. Buildings which contain Asbestos that are then demolished or refurbished present a significant risk to human health. Asbestos exposure of those involved in the demolition works – as well as members of the public – is an all-too common occurrence. Occasionally, these incidents are reported in the national newspapers, more often than not they go unnoticed or unpunished.

So what are the solutions to prevent further Asbestos exposure throughout the region?

For new construction projects, it’s simply not enough to contractually exclude ACMs prior to construction. Developers, contractors and consultants must have an awareness of materials on their sites that could contain Asbestos and the common locations for ACMs. Competent persons should undertake desktop audits of construction materials prior to their arrival on site and should conduct physical inspections of on-site building materials prior to their installation.

by CW Guest Columnist on Aug 2, 2014 Read More
New asbestos safety rules take effect from Friday

Revised rules to protect workers from exposure to asbestos - mineral fibres in construction material that can cause diseases - will take effect from Friday.

That is when the Workplace Safety and Health (Asbestos) Regulations will replace the existing Factories (Asbestos) Regulations, said the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) yesterday.

Under the new rules, an asbestos survey must be carried out before any work involving certain materials or before building works such as demolition or alteration.

This must be done by someone with enough experience and training and who has passed the Survey Asbestos and Other Fibres Risks at the Workplace Course, under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications framework.

Author Janice Heng, Read More

Pipes with asbestos still used in new buildings

Pipes containing asbestos are being installed in new condominiums, hospitals and high-rises in Canada, despite widespread health concerns that have led many countries to ban its use.

The new installations come as cities across the country are spending millions of dollars to manage and remove asbestos materials from public buildings such as schools, community centres, courts and medical facilities.

Unlike most other developed countries, Canada has never banned the use of asbestos and continues to import and export asbestos-containing materials, such as pipes and tiles, The Globe and Mail has reported.

Asbestos-cement pipes are allowed in both Canada and the United States, though there are regulations about how to cut and dispose of them. It is unclear how many asbestos-cement pipes are being installed in Toronto and other cities, and there appear to be no central records of where asbestos is being used. Once the products are imported into Canada, it’s difficult to pinpoint where it actually gets sold. A key concern is that many workers, tenants and owners may not know asbestos materials are in their buildings, raising the risk of accidental exposures particularly in the event of a fire, or as the materials start to deteriorate.

Author Tavia Grant, Read More

Exclusive ADAO interview with Syed Mezab Ahmed, 1st National Ban Asbestos Pakistan Conference Organizer

Since 2007, Syed Haroon Ahmed has been investigating the death of his brother, Syed Fareed Ahmed, from cancer of the tongue at age 55. Through his research, he’s uncovered countless examples of dangerous exposure to asbestos at the Dadex factory where his brother worked in Karachi, Pakistan. His son, Mezab Ahmed, has taken up his father’s work in seeking justice for his brother and fighting asbestos in Pakistan. On February 1st 2014, Mezab held Pakistan’s first ever Ban Asbestos Conference; a very successful event, even drawing Pakistani presidential recognition. Mezab has also recently published a short 115 page special “Ban Asbestos Pakistan souvenir program” emphasizing the countries need for greater asbestos awareness, healthy and safety. The book features the compiled evidence by the Ahmed family that attests to the dangers of asbestos. Messages from the President of Pakistan and several other dignitaries from Pakistan and abroad are featured along with a copy of the BAN Asbestos. Read More

Longtime asbestos industry consultant, David Bernstein, discloses his industry ties

David Bernstein is heavily financed by and works intimately with asbestos lobby organisations, such as the International Chrysotile Association. For more than a decade of writing papers and making presentations that promote the use of chrysotile asbestos, Bernstein has never disclosed this as a conflict of interest.

In June 2014, a complaint was sent to the publisher and editor of the journal, Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine, regarding the fact that in an article that the journal had published, entitled The health risk of chrysotile asbestos, Bernstein falsely stated: “There are no conflicts of interest.”
Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine has now published the following correction:

**The health risk of chrysotile asbestos: Erratum**

During the editing process of the recent article by Bernstein [1], the conflicts of interest statement was wrongly amended from ‘No conflicts of interest relevant to this article’ to ‘There are no conflicts of interest.’ The publisher apologises for this error.

Dr Bernstein would like to take this opportunity to clarify that he works as a scientific consultant to the chrysotile asbestos industry and gives presentations worldwide on the science of chrysotile asbestos. In the last three years he has received payment for his consultancy services from: Honeywell, International Chrysotile Association and Zimbabwe National Chrysotile Taskforce.

Dr Bernstein received no payment, compensation or funding for the current article [1]. The article is solely his work and the opinions stated therein are his own.

**REFERENCE**


The Erratum has all the signs of being a compromise that has been hammered out by lawyers for Bernstein and the journal. Bernstein’s tactic of endeavouring to weasel out of declaring his flagrant conflict of interest by using the words “relevant to this article” is shamefully devious. The article in Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine puts forward the same message that Bernstein has been paid by the asbestos industry for more than a decade to put forward. Furthermore, the article in Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine enthusiastically and self-servingly promotes as being “of special interest” and “of outstanding interest” two other articles by Bernstein – the first being an article that was funded by and advanced the interests of Honeywell International Inc. and the second being an article which was funded by and advanced the interests of the International Chrysotile Association. Thus Bernstein’s article in Current Opinion in Pulmonary Medicine was awash with undisclosed conflict of interest in violation of the journal’s Conflict of Interest requirements.

Author Kathleen Ruff, Read More

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**Fiber cement: Ideal material for affordable housing**

Amid concerns for affordable housing, brought about by the destruction of typhoon Yolanda and by the country’s housing backlog, the need for the quick construction of comfortable and long-lasting homes for the average Filipino has never been more urgent.

To address this, The Mahaphant Group — one of Asia’s leading manufacturers of building construction materials — has proposed the use of fiber cement to fast-track such projects.

Fiber cement — which is made up of Portland cement, silica, water, and wood pulp — is an increasingly popular building material known for its sturdiness. Used in a variety of applications, such as roofing and walling, it lends itself to quick construction while providing cost-effectiveness and high-quality aesthetics.

“Fiber cement is one of very few building materials that provides benefits and values to both consumers and builders for small-to-large scale and simple-to-complicated installation of building constructions,” said Veerasak Kittinanthakool, VP for marketing of SHERA, during the recent Affordable Housing Conference in Makati City. Read More

**The asbestos lie. The past and present of an industrial catastrophe**

Edited by :Denis Grégoire

For decades asbestos was considered an ideal substance and therefore was called ‘the mineral of the twentieth century’. Even though the fiber had already proven much earlier to cause various ailments, a real boom began in the 1950s and prospered everywhere in Europe.

This book retraces the history of the Swiss asbestos cement company Eternit, investigating the strategy it developed – together with other asbestos industrialists – to prevent this carcinogen from being outlawed until, in 1999, an EU Directive was finally adopted to this end. The book also reviews the struggle of the asbestos workers and their families to gain official recognition of, and compensation for, the harm suffered.
Asbestos use in construction a labor hazard

HANOI, (PNA/VNS) — The use of asbestos in construction should be stopped as it poses serious health risks to workers, said experts at a conference in Hanoi yesterday.

The conference, which was hosted by the Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations, heard a World Health Organization (WHO) report claimed that exposure to asbestos, a set of six naturally occurring silicate minerals used in construction, can cause serious illnesses including lung cancer and asbestosis.

WHO has warned that an average of 1.25 million of workers worldwide die each year due to direct exposure to asbestos and more than 107,000 deaths each year are caused by illnesses related to asbestos.

So far, 54 countries have banned the use of asbestos, and experts said those still using the material, are mostly traditional producers of asbestos and developing countries.

Asbestos may cause harmful health: WHO

Many Vietnamese people suffer lung diseases and cancer owing to exclusive exposure to Asbestos, but may not be diagnosed early.

This news was released at a scientific seminar 'How Asbestos affects health' held by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the World Health Organization (WHO) on July 17 in Hanoi.

Deputy health minister Nguyen Thanh Long pointed out at the seminar that Vietnam is one of ten countries which use Asbestos much in the world. WHO and international cancer researchers did warn of the straight link of Asbestos to cancer and lung diseases. Realizing that Asbestos can cause harm to human health, the Ministry of Health has issued a guideline for protecting the workers' health.

Diseases caused by Asbestos exposure are included in insured profession indexes in the country. 'Asbestos should not considerd as the most effective way to eliminate Asbestos-related diseases', said deputy health minister Long.

Science and Technology Deputy Minister Tran Van Tung said that Asbestos is only used in technology for defense and nuclear power plants. It is also used as roof sheets suiting in outbuildings, warehouses and garages.

People in mountainous districts even deploy Asbestos sheet for collecting rain-water for daily activities.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tran Van Thuan, deputy director of the Hanoi-based K Hospital said that those who have exposed to the dangerous substance over 30 years are at highly risk of getting lung cancer. The incubation is around 20-30 years. Laborers who exposed to Asbestos develop lung diseases when they are retired and their document can be lost already; thus researches on effects of Asbestos is limited in developing nations.

WHO's calculation showed that approximately 100,000 people in the world are killed and more than 1.5 million people are terminally ill by asbestos exposure.

Workers poisoned by solvents in the production of raw materials

Nhan Dan Online - morning 19-5, hundreds of workers of Hong Phuc Co. shoes and shoe company Rollsport in Huanglong Industrial Zone, Ward Tao Xuyen, Thanh Hoa city to dizziness, nausea, fainting, 469 people employee was taken to the Hospital emergency Synergy, nearly 17 hours on the same day, 392 people have been released from the hospital.

In addition, many other workers will be taken care treatment in hospital in Thanh Hoa City. Earlier, on day 9 hours 45 minutes 15-5, in the two companies mentioned above also occur many workers were fainting than 700 workers should be taken to the nearest hospital for emergency treatment.

Thanh Hoa police took six samples of water (in the tank, the water plant in house A, the tree ST4, ST5, ST6 and factories in the country); black powder - white and try to download C; air collected in factory C; vomitus of seven workers; shoe glue, liquid glue sewing machine and detergent, and
then submitted to referendum criminal Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Public Security inspection.

**Relatives of patients take porridge to eat**

By day 17-5, Scientific Institute of Public Security Criminal informed assessment results are as follows: six samples; black powder - white in studio and C; air in the workshop production of C; vomitus of seven workers are not commonly found toxins. The sample shoe glue, glue sewing machine, liquid detergent composition found solvents: hydrocarbons, ethyl acetate and N-propyn acetate. The solvent is volatile at room temperature, the higher the temperature, the faster evaporation rate and distinct aroma, irritate the eyes, nose, and throat. The solvent inhalation dizziness, headache, nausea, fatigue, cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, pale skin can because blood lacks oxygen. Hydrocarbon solvents can irritate and damage the lining eyes, nose, throat, lungs; high concentrations can cause nose bleeds, runny nose, sore throat. Read More

**Explainer: Electronics and Human Rights**

Americans spend over $125 billion on consumer electronics every year, more than the entire gross domestic product of some populous countries such as Bangladesh. Electronics, ranging from the latest kitchen gadgets to innovative smartphones, seem to change Western consumption habits year to year more than any other consumer products. And in the past decade, no segment of the electronics industry has transformed global life more than digital communications. Nine out of ten American adults own a cell phone. It is difficult to imagine the modern workplace functioning without the use of the Internet and its conduits. Nearly one in five people across the globe purchased a new mobile phone sometime in 2012, and nearly 2.5 billion individuals, more than a third of the world’s population, make use of the Internet.

Whereas the agriculture and garment industries have developed for millennia, the electronics industry is less than a century old—though early computing technology was based on innovations in textile manufacturing, such as punch card machines. It’s tempting to imagine that this fledgling industry might have skipped over some of the worst labor abuses associated with older industrial sectors, but electronics workers have been subject to child labor abuses, low wages, dangerous working conditions, and environmental degradation from the dawn of the digital age.

Transistor radios—perhaps the first mobile communications devices that linked individuals through electricity and airwaves—were engineered in the United States after World War II. When William Shockley opened his laboratory in Mountain View, California, in the mid 1950s and stopped using germanium semiconductors in favor of silicon ones, he introduced a new age in electronics. Read More

**Despite a Pledge by Samsung, Child Labor Proves Resilient**

DONGGUAN, China — After work, the three teenage girls giggle and pull at one another’s hair. But when questioned, they admit their common secret: They use false papers to work illegally here at the factory that makes mobile phone components for one of the world’s biggest brands, Samsung.

They are 14 and 15 years old, below the legal working age in China. A few weeks ago, they were living at home with their parents in a small village a six-hour drive from here, finishing middle school.

“We also worked at a factory last summer,” said one of the girls, who all spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of getting fired. “But it was much worse. We were making Christmas ornaments, and some workers got huge blisters on their hands.”

The presence of at least three child workers at the factory in southern China casts a cloud over the labor practices of Samsung and its suppliers.

A little more than a week ago, Samsung, the South Korean electronics giant, said in an annual review of conditions at its manufacturing centers that it had found no evidence of under-age workers or child laborers in its global supply chain. In recent years, Samsung has promoted its efforts to monitor and evaluate suppliers and manufacturing operations around the world, noting that the policies were aimed at protecting workers and preventing minors from being hired.

For instance, even though the legal working age in China is 16, Samsung considers that too young, and so its suppliers are instructed not to hire workers under 18. To ensure they do not cheat, Samsung
says, it has forced all of them to install a sophisticated facial recognition system on factory sites. Read More

Polluting textile and other industries in Jodhpur to pay Rs 5 Lakh each to Government

Pollution Control Board to plan for complete wastewater collection, treatment and reuse and achieve zero discharge

The Principal Bench (Delhi) of the National Green Tribunal in Laxmi Suiting versus State of Rajasthan and Others (the Tribunal has clubbed ‘62 appeals/applications, as they raise common questions of law, based upon somewhat similar facts’, filed by the industries in Jodhpur as by Laxmi Suiting), in its judgement on 1st May 2014 observed that Laxmi Suiting, along with the other applicants are not entitled to the benefit of Section 25(7) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 (the Water Act) which provides that when an application seeking consent of the State Pollution Control Board for establishment or operation of new sources of sewage discharge, which is complete in all respect is made, such consent will be deemed to have been granted if no reply is given by the Board, within a period of four months.. It further observed that the Jodhpur Pradushan Niwaran Trust (the body from whom the permission was sought) had not acted arbitrarily or in contravention to the principles of natural justice, while revoking the application of the applicants or ordering their closure.

The Trust is a body established with the sanction and permission from the Government. It established a Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) and gave permission to the members, like the applicant, to discharge effluents into the drain that would be carried to the CETP of the Trust and treated there prior to further discharge.

The applicants had filed the cases in relation to the rejection of their application to use the CETP of the Trust for treating the discharged effluents.

The Tribunal observed that the applicants fell within the category of industries which had been established without the consent of the State Pollution Control Board (as provided under Section 25(5) of the Water Act), which bars the very application of Section 25(7) of the Water Act. Further, it observed that the applicants were non-compliant, polluting industries and were offending the provisions of the Water Act.

The Tribunal further observed that the applicants had not suffered any prejudice, as when the directions were issued under the Section 33A (which empowers the State Pollution Control Board to issue directions, which also includes directing the closure, prohibition or the regulation of any industry or its operation) suffered from the defect of non-compliance and violation of the principle of audi alteram partem, as specifically built in Rule 34 of the Water Rules (which governs the application of Section 33A of the Water Act). The applicants cannot be permitted to take advantage of such non-compliance and continue to pollute the environment. As a result no violation of principles of natural justice can be said to have been done by the Trust.

The Tribunal has issued several directions, the important among which are that the Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation Limited, the Trust, and the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board to formulate a time targeted action plan for complete wastewater collection, treatment and reuse within one month from the date of this order to achieve zero discharge. It also directed that all industrial units operating without the consent of the Board will be liable to pay Rs five lakh each to the State Government/Board for causing pollution, failing to take appropriate measures and establishing anti pollution devices, as required by the law.

The Tribunal further directed the State Board to monitor the quantum of waste water generated periodically for which consent is to be granted or will be granted to the industries which are connected to the CETP. It further instructed the State Board to conduct inspection of the CETP of the Trust as well as the industrial units in and around the industrial estate at regular intervals and ensure that they are discharging trade effluents in accordance with the specified limits and prescribed standards.

It directed the Trust to enhance its present capacity to accommodate the entire effluent generated in the industrial area.

Pushp Jain & Joyti Ranjan Deo, EIA Resource and Response Centre (ERC)
New AIHA Fact Sheet Focuses on Eliminating Confined Spaces, Minimizing Hazards

The AIHA Confined Spaces Committee recently developed a fact sheet on how Prevention through Design concepts can help eliminate confined spaces and minimize hazards. The fact sheet describes some of the top design principles to consider for confined spaces, including preventing the creation of confined spaces or eliminating existing confined spaces; eliminating the need for entry into confined spaces; making entry into confined spaces impossible if entry is not required; and designing the space to ensure ability to rescue. Read More

Long-term Exposure to Crystalline Silica and Risk of Heart Disease Mortality

Background:
The association between crystalline silica exposure and risk of heart disease mortality remains less clear.

Methods:
We investigated a cohort of 42,572 Chinese workers who were potentially exposed to crystalline silica and followed from 1960 to 2003. Cumulative silica exposure was estimated by linking a job-exposure matrix to each person’s work history. Low-level silica exposure was defined as never having held a job with an exposure higher than 0.1 mg/m3. We estimated hazard ratios (HRs) in exposure–response analyses using Cox proportional hazards model.

Results:
We identified 2846 deaths from heart disease during an average of 35 years follow-up. Positive exposure–response trends were observed for cumulative silica exposure associated with mortality from total heart disease (HRs for increasing quartiles of cumulative silica exposure compared with the unexposed group = 0.89, 1.09, 1.32, 2.10; P for linear trend < 0.001) and pulmonary heart disease (0.92, 1.39, 2.47, 5.46; P for linear trend < 0.001). These positive trends remained among workers with both high- and low-level silica exposure. There was also a positive trend for ischemic heart disease among workers with low-level exposure, with quartile HRs of 1.04, 1.13, 1.52, and 1.60 (P for linear trend < 0.001).

Conclusion:
Low-level crystalline silica exposure was associated with increased mortality from heart disease, including pulmonary heart disease and ischemic heart disease, whereas high-level exposure mainly increased mortality from pulmonary heart disease. Current permissible exposure limits for crystalline silica in many countries may be insufficient to protect people from deaths due to heart disease.

Study by Liu, Yuewei; Rong, Yi; Steenland, Kyle; Christiani, David C.; Huang, Xijia; Wu, Tangchun; Chen, Weihong Read More

No Safe Use – The invisible Epidemic

For John Nolan, the first warning signs came mid-November of last year while he was leading a tour in the Peruvian Andes.

Mr. Nolan, 67, who lives in Fort Erie in southwestern Ontario, was guiding a group through the mountains near the storied Incan city of Cuzco.

He had criss-crossed the planet for years as a tour guide, and knew what higher altitudes typically felt like. But something terrifying happened while he was hauling his luggage up some steep stone steps to his cabin.

“I’ve never been out of breath in such a panicky, horrible way,” Mr. Nolan says in a raspy voice between laboured breaths. “Normally, when you run out of breath, you know you’re going to get it back. This was different. It was as if you were hitting a stone wall, with no hope of getting air. It was like suffocating.”

The diagnosis, back at home, was swift and cruel. It was mesothelioma — an incurable cancer caused almost exclusively by asbestos exposure. Mr. Nolan was initially given a few months to live.

Asbestos is the top on-the-job killer in Canada. But a Globe and Mail investigation has found that this stark fact has been obscured by the country’s longstanding economic interest in the onetime “miracle mineral.” Even though Canada’s own asbestos industry has dwindled from pre-eminence to insignificance — the country’s last two mines closed in 2011 — the federal government has
dragged its feet as other nations have acknowledged asbestos’s deadly impact and moved to protect their populations from it. Read More

**Gujarat govt "solution" for workers suffering from deadly silicosis: Go in for alternative job sources**

By Our Representative: Will the Gujarat government implement its word to pay compensation of paltry Rs 1 lakh against those who died because of the deadly occupational disease silicosis starting with 2007? While the amount itself is very small, in a recent decision, it decided to pay up the relatives of those who died while working in agate stone-cutting factories, mainly in Kambhat, with effect from January 2014. “We have been assured that the matter will be sorted out”, said Jagdish Patel of the People’s Training and Research Centre (PTRC), which works among silicosis workers. “However, it must await ministerial nod”, he added.

Patel, who met senior officials of the Gujarat government in Gandhinagar to sort out issues related with the occupational disease, said, “The view is also strong in the Gujarat government that instead of stressing too much on the welfare of those working in factories which cause silicosis, there should be an effort to move out workers in alternative sources of employment. During out meeting, a senior official kept asking us why these people are continuing to cling on to this work when they know the dangers.” So far six persons have reported died due to silicosis this year, and 140 are fatally suffering.

“While the Gujarat government officials kept saying that they would assure all help to those wanting to come out of the occupation, we told them that, things are not as easy as they seem to suggest. Read More

**Death of 8 workers trapped in fire should be wake-up call for PH—labor group**

MANILA, Philippines – It’s not the first time that workers were killed in a fire after being trapped in a padlocked building. And it might happen again if the government doesn’t move fast, a labor safety organization said.

The Institute for Occupational Health and Safety for Development (Iohsad) claimed that the employer of the eight women who died of suffocation after their warehouse was engulfed in flames last May 30 should be held accountable for violating his workers’ right to safe workplaces.

The employer, a Chinese businessman named Juanito Go, denied accusations that he padlocked the workers in the second floor room of a warehouse along P. Samonte Street, Barangay (village) 47 in Pasay City.

But Iohsad pointed out that the lack of a fire escape was enough evidence of poor working conditions.

“Reports said that the workers who survived the tragedy escaped through a narrow hole in the building. This is a clear violation of Rule 1943.03 of the Philippine Occupational Health and Standards (OHSS) that outlines the need to have at least 2 exits in every floor and basement capable of clearing the work area in five minutes,” the group said in a statement.

Iohsad Executive Director Noel Colina said the “tragedy confirms our country’s recent inclusion in the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) report as one of the worst countries to work in.”

The ITUC’s 2014 Global Rights Index, released two weeks ago, gave the Philippines a rate of “5,” joining countries like India, Saudi Arabia, Cambodia and other countries where there is “no guarantee of rights.”

Author Kristine Angeli Sabillo, Read More

"Safe" Workplace Solvents Affect Brain Aging

People who regularly work with "safe" solvents such as paint or degreasers face an increased risk of thought and memory problems as they age, according to a recent study.

The study, published in the journal Neurology on May 13, details how researchers determined that individuals who work in construction or utilities face heightened risk of advanced cognitive decline as they age. They associated this decline with regular exposure to regulated solvents such as benzene, chlorine, and petroleum.

According to the study, researchers interviewed and assessed the cognitive capabilities of 2,143
retirees from the French national utility company Electricité de France/Gaz de France.

Through questionnaires and interviews, the researchers measured each participant’s past exposure to benzene, found in dyes, detergent, rubber and plastic; chlorinated solvents, found in dry cleaning products, paint removers, degreasers, and engine cleaners; and petroleum solvents, used in varnish, paint thinner, paint, and carpet glue. Read More

All 14 mine workers diagnosed positive of silicosis

JAIPUR: The worst case of silicosis was uncovered when 14 out of 14 mine workers, who had been for a medical examination in Kota, were confirmed positive. The average age of these mine workers is 48 years. The figure is the highest percentage of confirmed cases of silicosis examined by the Pneumoconiosis Board. Sources said these persons will now be provided with monetary relief of Rs 1 lakh by the environmental board.

This is the first time after the amendment in Rajasthan Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Rules, 1965 that the Pneumoconiosis Board gathered in Government Medical College & MBS Hospital, Kota to diagnose occupational diseases. Prior to the constitution of the board most of the workers had been diagnosed for tuberculosis.

Under the Workmen Compensation Act, 1923, the state government established Rajasthan Silicosis Rules, 1955. A decade down the line the government came out with Rajasthan Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Rules, 1965 under Section 32 of Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923. Under these new set of rules the scope of the occupational diseases was broadened and pneumoconiosis, which covers silicosis or coal miners pneumoconiosis or asbestosis or any of these diseases accompanied by pulmonary tuberculosis, was mentioned under one of these classes. Read More

New advisory to end ‘inspector raj’

NEW DELHI: To usher in greater ease of doing business, the government has taken steps to rein in the notorious "inspector raj". In an advisory to all ministries which is aimed to check fishing expeditions by inspectors, the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP) has said no inspection of business premises and factories should be done unless it is approved by the head of the department.

It has also asked all ministries to shift to a system of self-certification of adherence of official norms by all companies, barring those engaged in activities that are regarded as "hazardous" or involving "risk". The DIPP has communicated that the Prime Minister wants these new measures be actioned without delay and their implementation constantly reviewed.

Ministries have been told that all returns should be filed online through a unified form and a check-list of required compliances should be placed on the ministry/department's website. They have also been asked to replace all registers that are required to be maintained by businesses with a single electronic register. Read More

Hazardous stone crushing: SC takes notice of silicosis deaths in Gujranwala

ISLAMABAD: In his last day in office on July 5, outgoing chief justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani took suo motu notice over the death of 18 labourers in Gujranwala, The Express Tribune has learnt.

The Supreme Court has sought a report from all secretaries of labour and human resource department, Gujranwala commissioner and heads of environmental protection agencies in this regard within two weeks.

Earlier, two members of Public Lawyers Front (PLF) namely Osama Khawar and Yahya Farid Khawaja moved the SC under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution, requesting it to direct the provincial governments to frame rules regulating occupations involving stone-crushing and the hazardous emission of silica dust.

The application pointed out that though the deceased labourers made repeated requests to the factory owners, they were neither provided with any masks to protect them from silica powder inhalation, nor did the factory owners install any dust control equipment.

The applicants furnished a list of 18 young labourers, who died in Gujranwala from silicosis.
Among them were nine labourers who were from one village in Gujranwala. The latest victim of silicosis is Safdar Ali from Gujranwala who succumbed to the disease three weeks ago. Ali’s brother also died last year from the same disease.

Published in The Express Tribune, July 13th, 2014.

World Health Organization asks Zimbabwe to correct its misrepresentation of the WHO position on asbestos

On May 29, 2014, the Zimbabwe government released its Position Paper on Chrysotile Asbestos. The Position Paper incorrectly states that the World Health Organization (WHO) embraces “controlled use” of chrysotile asbestos. This statement is false. The position of the WHO is that chrysotile asbestos cannot be safely used and that all use of chrysotile asbestos should stop.

A letter was sent to Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO, requesting that the WHO officially ask Zimbabwe to correct this misrepresentation of the WHO position on asbestos.

On instruction from Director-General Margaret Chan, the WHO has now confirmed that it has asked the Zimbabwe government to correct the misinformation. The WHO says: “We are confident that action to correct the inaccurate statement regarding WHO’s position will be taken as soon as possible.” Author Kathleen Ruff.

Deadly silica standard is killing UK workers

When the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Teesdale Architectural Stone Ltd (TASL) in September 2007, it discovered workers were facing unacceptably high exposures to crystalline silica, a dust that can cause lung cancer, the breath-stealing disorder silicosis and other serious diseases.

In two letters, the regulator told the Barnard Castle firm to clean up its act. Then it did nothing. After all, the company had written twice to assure the watchdog improvements had been made.

Only they hadn’t. Five more years passed before a return HSE visit discovered workers were still facing a lung-clogging and potentially deadly daily dose of dust.

What’s the problem?

The US regulator says clear the air, the UK regulator says eat dust

- In the UK, the official workplace safety regulator the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is resisting behind closed doors any shift to a more stringent silica exposure standard that would help prevent cancers, lung and kidney diseases and other potentially fatal conditions. Affected workers have no say.
- In the US, the official workplace safety regulator, OSHA, is arguing at public hearings for a rule change to halve the same exposure standard. Affected workers have given evidence at these government hearings.
- In the UK, HSE is arguing the industry line about potential costs in implementing new controls and technical difficulties in monitoring a tighter standard.
- In the US, OSHA is challenging the industry line about potential costs in implementing new controls and technical difficulties in monitoring. It says the changes are technically feasible and, as well as saving thousands of lives, the tighter standard would not lead to job losses but would deliver multi-billion dollar savings to the economy.
- In the US, OSHA says introducing a more protective standard will drive the development of improved monitoring and control methods for workplace silica dust.
- In the UK, HSE has nothing to say on the issue of tighter standards driving improvements.

Poor healthcare ups private spending

The ninth edition of the National Health Profile, 2013, released here on Thursday, reveals that per capita private expenditure on health is three to four times higher than per capita public expenditure in all major States — the exceptions being some Northeastern States and Jammu and Kashmir.

The report by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare says the expenditure on health has
gone down from 4.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000 to 3.7 per cent in 2010. The report highlights data on relevant health indicators and uses information from the 2011 census data and said fund flow to the health sector is maximum by private funds at 71. 62 per cent as per 2008-09 estimates. It said public funds had accounted only for 26.70 per cent.

During the 11th plan, 2007-12, Gujarat received the maximum budget allocation of Rs. 3,060 crore among all States.

Health status indicators reveal that the maximum number of malaria deaths has been reported from Maharashtra (70), while Odisha reported the largest number of cases — 2,16,568. The overall prevalence of the disease has diminished in the last three years, the report said.

Click here to see the National Health Profile (NHP) of India – 2013

Blast at China Car-Parts Supplier Kills at Least 68

Preliminary Investigation Suggests Dust Blast Caused Explosion

SHANGHAI—At least 68 people were killed and about 187 injured in a major blast at a factory in eastern China that supplies the country's massive automobile industry and indirectly some of the biggest international brands as a subcontractor in the production of wheels, the company and state media reported.

A preliminary investigation suggests a dust blast caused the explosion early Saturday at the metal-polishing plant just outside Shanghai, in the Jiangsu province city of Kunshan, the reports said. More than 260 people were in the plant at the time and about 44 people were killed in the initial blast, while others died later, the reports said, suggesting the death toll may rise and that victims are being treated in various cities around Kunshan.

Combustible dust is a widely known industrial hazard that has led to deaths at factories around the world, including in China. Safety experts warn that in the absence of good ventilation a buildup of heat, oxygen and a material, often dusty particles such as pulverized metal, can spark massive explosions without warning.

The accident prompted sympathetic comments about the victims and calls for a response from both China's president and its premier. President Xi Jinping called for a thorough investigation and "harsh punishment" for those responsible, according to Xinhua. Read More

How mining giants like Rio Tinto can hurt towns

NIC Clayton walks into the Prince of Wales pub in Holyhead in North Wales and smiles broadly.

“It wasn’t always like this you know,” he says almost apologetically to us, perhaps in sympathy to the girl working the bar as he orders another cider.

There has only been four patrons come into the once bustling pub all morning, and one of those just stopped by to ask directions.

“I remember coming in here and it would be five or six deep at the bar; we were all mates, everyone knew everyone and it was a great atmosphere but that changed in 2009,” he says.

In 2009, Rio Tinto Group shut down smelting operations at its Anglesey Aluminium plant that had been producing 145,000 tonnes of aluminium a year, the cost cut sending 400 workers to the jobs queues albeit with their wallets bulging from hefty redundancy packages. Read More

Illegal gold mining in Peru - in pictures

A ban on illegal gold mining in Peru took effect on 19 April. Madre de Dios state has an estimated 40,000 illegal miners, most of whom are poor migrants from the Andean highland, and their work accounts for about 20% of Peru’s gold exports. However, their work has also ravaged forests and poisoned rivers in a biodiverse region. Associated Press photographer Rodrigo Abd documents the frantic work of the miners up to the moment when government forces arrived to put them out of business. Read More

Two forest officials to be tried for illegal mining

JAIPUR: In a first-of-its-kind case, the Union ministry of environment and forests has filed a prosecution report against two forest officials for allowing illegal mining in Hindaun tehsil in Karauli
district. The two are booked under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

Earlier, a local court in Karauli had ordered registration of cases against A B Raizada, who was deputy conservator of forests, Karauli, in 2004 and Hakim Singh, a former assistant conservator of forests, under Forest Act. Former minister Bharosi Lal Jatav, who patronized illegal mining in the area, however, is saved with the Supreme Court staying his prosecution.

The pre-charge collection of evidence against the officers is scheduled in Hindaun on June 12, 2014.

"Raizada, vide letter dated October 25, 2004 informed the mining engineer, Karauli that Khasra No. 552 (old) (new 1753) in Khareta village, Hindaun tehsil is reserved forest. However, just after one month, vide letter dated November 18, 2004 allegedly at the behest of Hakim Singh, he submitted the report that above mentioned Khasra is Siwai Chak non-forest land. On the basis of this report, Raizada gave NOC to the mining engineer, Karauli in 2005 and he sanctioned nine mining leases for 20 years spread over nine hectares," said Y K Singh Chauhan, chief conservator of forests, regional office, Lucknow, MoEF, who initiated action against the two officers before repatriation to his parent cadre Jharkhand.

Mine Safety To Be Aligned With ILO Standards

ISTANBUL — The coal mine disaster in Soma, which happened four days ago and caused the deaths of 301 mineworkers, has spurred the Ministry of Labor to propose initiatives to improve mine safety. The director at the General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety, which is under the Ministry of Labor, Kasim Özer, said that a commission would be formed with the participation of all corresponding parties.

Özer declared that all related parties from trade unions to employers and employees to public institutions, from experts to representatives of the private sector will be officially invited to participate in the commission. He added that examples from around the world will be used to determine which changes need be made to improve mining regulations.

The director also highlighted that the requirements of Article 176 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) "Safety and Health in Mines Convention" will be discussed in the commission.

The fact that Turkey did not sign this article has been highly controversial. "We always arrange and renew regulations in various sectors from agriculture to forestry.

After the disaster, we prioritized the issue of mining," Özer noted. "Any suggestions will be evaluated by the commission, after which a draft will be prepared.

The draft will be shared with any social parties. Then we will organize a sub-commission on the draft. The sub-commission will be converted into a regulatory commission, and the draft will be presented for evaluation, after which efforts will be made so that the draft comes into effect via legal regulation."