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TSU urges ban on China chopsticks

09/21/2007 (Taiwan News)

The opposition Taiwan Solidarity Union urged the government on Thursday not to allow imports of disposable chopsticks from China because of safety concerns.

The party said that Chinese disposable chopsticks contain hazardous substances such as lead, fluorescent material and sulfur dioxide which pose a health risk to consumers. Party officials also demonstrated at the press conference that Chinese chopsticks emit a pungent acidic odor after being placed in hot water for a few seconds.

TSU Legislator Lai Shin-yuan (賴幸媛) said that Taiwan imports 5 billion pairs of chopsticks a year, with imports from China accounting for 40 percent of the total. About 5 million pairs of chopsticks are used in Taiwan every day, she added.

She said that the Consumers' Foundation discovered in random testing on disposable chopsticks sold on the market that 80 percent of the chopsticks contain sulfur dioxide residue and that 90 percent of the wooden skewers, which are usually used for eating roast meat, contain residue of the chemical.

Lai said she wanted to warn the public about the health risks that the chopsticks pose, especially ahead of the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival, during which many people in Taiwan eat roast meat. The festival falls on September 25 this year.

In addition to calling for the banning of imports of Chinese chopsticks, Lai also said that disposable chopsticks sold on the market that fail to meet safety standards should be taken off the shelves and destroyed.

Meanwhile, TSU spokesperson Chou Mei-li said that long-term exposure to sulfur dioxide can trigger skin rashes, negatively affect pulmonary function and lead to chronic bronchitis.

http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=525679&lang=eng_news&cate_img=49.jpg&cate_rss=news_Society_TAIWAN

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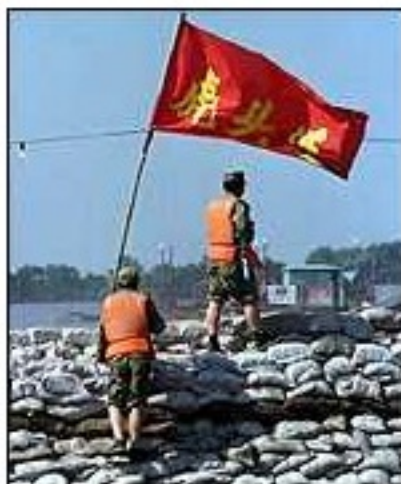
World: Asia-Pacific

China blames floods on deforestation



Soldiers and sandbags battle against nature

The authorities in China have admitted for the first time that excessive exploitation of natural resources could be behind this year's devastating floods.



China Daily and the official Xinhua news agency said that serious soil erosion caused by tree felling and other activities had silted up areas which usually acted as overflows for excessive rain.

The articles appeared as efforts continued in north-eastern China to hold back record high water levels around Harbin city in north-east China.

Flooding has been 0.75m higher than in 1957, the year that held the previous record for the worst flooding.



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