

India's central government has moved to tighten its grip on the quality of imported recovered paper and board, it was confirmed at the BIR Paper Round-Table in Milan.

BIR paper division vice-president Ranjit Baxi of UK-based J&H Sales International explained that, in late September, India's finance ministry had underlined tougher measures relating to the "import of banned municipal and other wastes in the guise of recovered paper or paper board". If a container was found to contain "a mixture of contaminated garbage/municipal waste or plastic waste", it would not be permitted customs clearance "under any circumstances" and the importer would be compelled to re-export it "at their own risk, cost and consequences immediately or latest within a fortnight".

As part of the country's stricter quality regime, almost all containers are now being inspected, Mr Baxi told a meeting which also heard about the growing importance of India as a consumer of recovered paper. Expansion programmes and new projects announced for the period 2005-2008 would add more than 500,000 tonnes per annum to the country's recovered paper requirements. Of this total, 240,000 tonnes of new capacity is already "ready to start", said Mr Baxi.

Meanwhile, China has remained a leading outlet for recovered paper and is likely to import more than 16 million

tonnes this year, as against 12.2 million tonnes in 2004 and 9.3 million tonnes in 2003. Figures provided by Mr. Baxi showed that US recovered paper exports to China totalled 4.522 million tonnes in the first seven months of this year, while the country received a further 2.485 million tonnes from Europe and 1.707 million tonnes from Japan.

China's top European supplier, the UK, shipped just short of 794,000 tonnes to the South East Asian giant in the first seven months of this year. Maarten Kleiweg de Zwaan, president of the European Recovered Paper Association, said that the UK was on course to export a grand total of more than 3 million tonnes of recovered paper in 2005 and that the figure "could double in the next three or four years". He also noted that, as a whole, Europe's exports had increased by 48% to 4.9 million tonnes last year while its recycling rate had reached 54.6%. In the context of the European Declaration on Paper Recovery, he stated: "It can be expected that we will reach the target set in 2000 of 56% in 2005."

In his UK market report, David Symmers of the Independent Waste Paper Processors Association agreed that his country's exports were likely to exceed 3 million tonnes this year but added that, in many instances, the recent upward trend in fuel prices had thrown into ques-