



Crop Care Federation of India

How pesticides are illegally imported into India from China?

A Case Study

In the year 2023, the Jawaharlal Nehru Custom House caught a Surat based syndicate engaged in importing huge quantities of high value pesticides from China by declaring them as industrial chemicals. The pesticides illegally imported include - **Chlorantraniliprole (CTPR), Emamectin Benzoate, Abamectin, Paclobutrazol, Diamethomorph, Ametroctradin, Pyraclostrobin, Dinotefuran, Gibberellic Acid, Fomesafen, Quizalofop Ethyl, and 6-Benzyladenine.**

The mastermind of this syndicate was one Mr. Rajesh Vasoya, Director of Vasoya Industries, Surat, Gujarat.

This paper explains in brief their modus operandi, recently made public by Jawaharlal Nehru Custom House.

1. Bill of Lading (BL) carried the name of industrial chemical (Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer) instead of pesticides.

Sr. No.	Bill of Entry/ BL No., & Date	Goods Description	Sample Type	CIL Test Result
M/s Gopal Exim				
1.	3877153 dated 23.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	A1 B1	Chlorantraniliprole (78.37%) Chlorantraniliprole (50.11%)
2.	3927133 dated 27.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	A1	Emamectin Benzoate (77.84%)
3.	3927390 dated 27.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	X1 Y1 Z1	Chlorantraniliprole (67.92%) Chlorantraniliprole (98.30%) Chlorantraniliprole (53.77%)
4.	3928502 dated 27.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	D1 E1	Chlorantraniliprole (95.30%) Chlorantraniliprole (96.80%)
5.	GLW2022120207 Dated 28.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	G1 H1	Chlorantraniliprole (55.25%) Chlorantraniliprole (55.11%)
M/s Satnam Enterprises				
6.	3927359 dated 27.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	R1	Diflubenzuron (13%)
M/s Vaishnavi Finechem				
7.	2022110218 dated 22.12.2022	Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer	F1	Chlorantraniliprole (98.40%)

2. The importers willfully evaded applicable custom duty.

For example: 7000 kgs of Chlorantraniliprole (CTPR) priced at \$70/kg (approx. Rs. 3.92 Cr) was imported mis-declared as Vinyl Acetate Ethylene Copolymer at \$2/kg (approx. Rs 11.20 lakh). Thus, the difference between the declared value and the actual value was Rs. 3.81 Cr. The intention was to clear the consignment by paying lower custom duty.

3. Major part of the payment was made through hawala route.

Nearly 80% of the payments were made through hawala route. This was established by the Custom Department using forensic analysis of electronic devices.

b. On being asked as to how the differential payment of the imported goods was made to the overseas supplier, he stated that they used hawala channels to send differential payment for the actual value of insecticides that are imported.

4. WeChat/WhatsApp communications were extensively used to discuss and finalize the order including the payment terms. Code names were used in the chats instead of the names of pesticides. For example : aba was used to refer to 'Abamectin' and nano aba to refer 'nano Abamectin'.



Screenshot of chat between foreign supplier and Surat dealer discussing 2 MT of ABA (Abamectin) and its delivery details.



5. The imports were made from unauthorized source in China.

For example - M/s Shanghai Mingdou Chemical Co. Ltd who supplied CTPR to the traders in Surat, were not licensed to produce CTPR in China. Besides, there's no Chinese source registered with CIB&RC in India for import of CTPR.

6. The illegally imported pesticides failed to meet Indian quality standards as per tests done at Central Insecticide Laboratory (CIL), Faridabad.

Other relevant information

This particular syndicate is alone estimated to have imported pesticide worth **Rs. 400 Cr.** (*around 150 Metric Tons of different insecticides per year*), through this illegal modus operandi. There could be many more such operators who still remain active underground.

Legitimate agrochemical industry in India loses several thousand crores of revenue due to illegal imports from China. Such imports bypass domestic safety regulations and reduce government tax revenues.

Illegally imported pesticides - being substandard - often fail to control pests, leading to lower yields and reduced revenue for farmers. It's an organized crime involving unlicensed or unethical local manufacturers (formulators) and their distribution networks. These networks are often characterized by forged documents and bribery.

This episode establishes the following facts

1. Pesticides get imported in the guise of industrial chemicals from China.
2. Under-invoicing is followed to evade higher custom duty. Difference between the actual value and bill value is paid through hawala route (illegal money transfer).

3. Substandard pesticide invariably enters India from such illegal imports.
4. Illegal import of pesticides can thrive only with covert domestic trade network.

Actions required from the government

1. Mis-declaration, under-invoicing and hawala transactions help illegal trade thrive in India. Therefore, stopping such illegal import from China would require a robust supplier verification and supply chain auditing.
2. India requires to improve import control mechanisms to facilitate traceability and quality control.
3. Make QR codes mandatory. QR codes in the pesticide trade enhance product traceability, verify authenticity to curb counterfeit goods, and ensure regulatory compliance.
4. Efforts are required to plug all the loopholes in the system that enable this kind of economic sabotage and contribute to health and environmental hazard.

Source:

Order No. 235/2025-26/Commr./NS-III/CAC/JNCH dated 17 October 2025 passed by Commissioner of Customs (NS-III), JNCH, Nhava Sheva.

Link : <https://www.jawaharcustoms.gov.in/pdf/OIO-2025/CC/gopal%20merged.pdf>

Crop Care Federation of India (CCFI) is an apex trade body for Indian agrochemicals industry with 50 companies as members. Our members account for over 75% of agrochemicals export from India.

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