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## Korean tech to manage plastic pollution

### Our Bureau

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CONVERT plastics back into oil? Is this possible? Yes, according to Koen Tech Co Ltd of Korea. The company claims to have produced a machine that can produce fuel oils (gasoline, kerosene and diesel) from waste plastic and waste synthetic resin.

The company's President, Mr Byeong Kweon Kang, gave a presentation about the machine at a seminar on plastic waste management, held here jointly by the Korea Trade Centre and the Centre for Environment Studies, Anna University.

"There are different technologies for managing plastic wastes, but the technology of Koen Tech appears very promising. That is why we invited them to participate in the seminar," Dr R. Nagendran of the Centre for Environment Studies, Anna University, told *Business Line*.

Mr Kang said that the company's machines had been sold in the US and other developed countries. He said that while the current method of earth filling takes 100 years for plastics to decompose (500 years for styrofoam) and incarceration causes pollution problems, the oil recycling device would be a viable option.

"The dioxin materials in the exhaust gas created by the oil recycling device operation are neutralised during the process," says the product literature brought out by Koen Tech Co.

Speaking at the seminar, the Vice-Chancellor of the Anna University, Dr E. Balagurusamy, said that as long as the production of plastics and their management matched, plastics could continue to be in use. However, if any mismatch arose, then it would lead to problems.

Mr S. Sugumar of Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology, Chennai, said that the plastics industry in India is growing at a rate of 12 per cent per annum. The global consumption of plastics is of the order of 140 million tonnes. India consumes around 3.6 million tonnes per annum. India's per capita consumption of plastics works out to 3.5 kg, as against the world average of 18 kg. However, it is expected that by 2007, the Indian consumption would go up to 8 million tonnes, raising the per capita consumption to about 7 kg.

Giving an overview of the `recycling status' in India, Mr Sugumar observed that there were around 20,000 recyclers in the country, who recycled about 1,000 tonnes of plastics each day. Plastic waste generation is estimated at around 1.3 million tonnes per annum. Most of the recycling is carried out mechanically.

Among the plastics that are recycled more than others are PVC (45 per cent recycled) and LDPE (25 per cent).