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## **e-waste: Greenpeace demands action from Wipro**

### **Our Bureau**

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Calling the Indian IT industry "woefully" behind the times as regards environment-conscious, Greenpeace on Tuesday challenged Wipro to set an example on e-waste management. Six months after attacking Wipro about its environment-unfriendliness, Greenpeace has again confronted the firm, demanding it to become the first Indian electronics company to tackle the growing e-waste crisis.

### **List of demands**

As part of its Tox Tech campaign, Greenpeace issued a list of demands to the firm. The list included introduction of a take-back policy, recycling and the implementation of a phase out policy for hazardous materials by the beginning of 2007.

"Wipro recognises the seriousness of the issue and has taken a drive to educate our customers on upgrading its old equipment and has an upgrade programme in place. Additionally, we have initiated actions to dispose e-waste through authorised agencies," said Mr Anil K. Jain, Vice- President - Corporate Business Unit, Wipro. In September 2005, Greenpeace had accused the IT behemoth of not taking responsibility for the entire lifecycle of its IT products. The company, in turn, has protested that being a member of MAIT, it is quite active on the issues related to the country.

MAIT is an association of hardware manufacturers in India.

"MAIT, along with other hardware manufacturer's associations, NGOs and government representatives have formed a nodal agency - EWA — which is taking up this issue," explained Mr Jain. The charter of this agency includes spreading awareness among the public regarding electronic waste, as well as providing training to the unorganised sector for best practices. The agency has already made a draft legislation in this regard and submitted to the Government for its consideration, he added.

However, Greenpeace activist, Ms Vinutha Gopal, says industry bodies in India discuss recycling plants and are ignoring assembly line manufacture, where hazardous materials are in use. Components of IT hardware can be manufactured using alternate substances, she said. Indian IT firms have not taken any steps to comply with the RoHS (restriction on certain hazardous substances), a European law banning the use of six deadly chemicals in electrical and electronic products, according to Ms Gopal. In response, Mr Jain said the

company was in talks with its component manufacturers in Taiwan and China to become RoHS compliant.

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