Singapore International Water Week

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Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre • 25 June 2009 • Issue 3

Putting people before patents

Sharing the fruits of his revolutionary research on water treatment solutions is a reward in itself, says the recipient of this year's Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize. Professor Gatze Lettinga is content in the knowledge that his invention is helping society.

The Dutch environmental engineer has chosen not to patent his revolutionary water treatment solution so that his concept can be universally applied and be made available to all.

Created and modified since the 1970s, Prof Lettinga's pioneering treatment concept enabled industrial used water to be purified cost-effectively and to produce renewable energy, fertilisers and soil conditioners. Apart from The Netherlands, his used water treatment method is also now increasingly applied to municipal water in countries like Brazil and India.

He was philosophical about not patenting his energy-efficient technology which uses micro-organisms in an oxygen-free environment to purify used water. Referring to the award which carries a cash prize of S$300,000, he says that it is an unexpected nod to his research efforts.

Prof Lettinga receives the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize from Singapore President S R Nathan (middle) during an award presentation ceremony at the Istana. Looking on is Water Prize Council chairman Dr Tony Tan.

"I'm retired but this will definitely motivate others in this field and this prestigious award shows that my system has been widely accepted," adds Prof Lettinga. When quizzed about his plans for the award, he said that a main part of the prize money has been transferred to a foundation he has set up for the design, troubleshooting and knowledge transfer of anaerobic technology.

Earlier, he called on Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew, in whose honour the prize was named.

Show-up 'n' Splash-Out

Today

AM

Business Forums
India
China
Australia

Water Convention
IWA's 6th Leading-Edge Conference on Water and Wastewater Technologies (LET)

PM

Business Forums
Japan
Middle East & North Africa
Europe

Dinner by the Bay@Marina Barrage

Bring Water Wally home

Collect him today at the Water Expo, PUB Pavilion. While stocks last.

WATER LEADERS SUMMIT

Well-rounded talks at leadership roundtables

The sweetest dishes are always savoured at the end of a meal and so it was with the Water Leaders Summit, which ended yesterday. Delegates were treated to some high-level discussions at the roundtables featuring some of the best brains of the water sector.

The first roundtable titled "Seeing Light in the Cloud" looked at investment opportunities boosting water infrastructure. Lisa Henthorne, President of International Desalination Association, set the scene by outlining the challenges confronting the water sector. But challenges could well be perceived as opportunities for moving towards sustainable practices and improved water efficiencies, she observed.

IDA President Lisa Henthorne, Saudi Arabia National Water Company Senior Privatisation Support Manager Fawaz Salem Bahlas and Singapore Water Association President Tang Kin Fei discuss how improvements to water infrastructure can boost the economy.

The second roundtable chaired by David Garman of International Water Association examined how to leverage on technologies and develop cost-effective water innovation.

An important talking point was that the government which plays such a pivotal role in facilitating innovation by funding research and education needs to also create markets that support innovation.

Before the summit came to an end, Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Yaacob Ibrahim announced that the theme for next year's Water Week will focus on clean and affordable water for sustainable cities.

WATER CONVENTION

Community interest key to sustainable solutions

Sustainability needs out-of-the-box thinking and Marina Barrage is one such example.

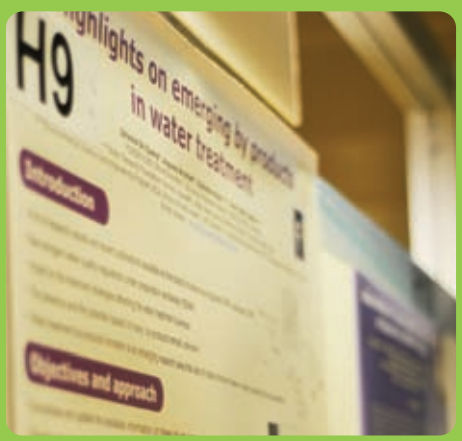
American firm CDM Inc's public services group president Paul Brown (right) believes that community interest played a crucial role in the design of Marina Barrage. "When CDM worked on the Marina Barrage project, we did not expect it to achieve this level of interest … the community found it and made it one of their own," he says. Mr Brown will be wrapping up the planning theme of the Water Convention today.

He emphasises the need to integrate a project into community life and turn it into a recreational and educational resource for the public in order to strengthen the ties between the users and the precious resource – water. CDM is the main consultant of the Marina Barrage.

This new iconic mega water infrastructure built across the mouth of Singapore's Marina Channel provides the city state with three benefits – a reservoir in the heart of the city, flood control and a water body for recreations all year round.

Leading-Edge Conference on Water and Wastewater Technologies (LET), CH2M HILL Senior Vice President Glen Daigger, chaired the wastewater treatment theme yesterday. "Waste water treatment is transitioning to a new stage, that of resource recovery, rather than just treatment. LET Conference is one of the places where practitioners are creating a different set of tools for this transition," he says.

Cast your votes



Choose your favourite poster from presentations made at the Water Convention. You have until 11am today to cast your votes for the "Best Poster" competition.

PWN widens knowledge sharing network

Sharing and caring seems to be the mantra of PWN, North Holland's water supply utility.

With the official launch of PWN Technologies at the Water Week, water companies the world over can now utilise PWN's technology, operational expertise and advanced water treatment solutions to provide clean water.

"As a public services organisation, it is our primary objective to utilise the best technology available for the good of the community. We want to now step up the sharing of this expertise with others and help more people get connected to a safe water supply," says PWN's Executive Director Martien den Blanken.

In another development, a leading global infrastructure development company, Black & Veatch, announced that it has been selected for Tai Po Water Treatment Works' expansion project in Hong Kong. This project will not only improve water reliability for the area's 7 million residents but also create about 2,100 jobs in the local construction industry.

A legacy lives on

VIP guests celebrate the centre's launch at the Water Week

A respected name who oversaw his company's services in the development of Singapore's signature urban projects was honoured yesterday at the official opening of US infrastructure development giant CDM's Singapore-based Neysadurai Technical Centre for Integrated Water Resources and Urban Planning.

CDM is pumping an initial funding of S$500,000 into the centre to create alternative integrated infrastructure schemes for the sustainable development of model townships, said CDM Associate John Bates.

Co-located Events

Pilot water remineralisation opens in Tampines

The Tampines Remineralisation Pilot Plant, a joint project by PUB Singapore and Israeli firm, Renewed Water Minerals, was inaugurated this morning at the Tampines Variable Salinity Plant. The plant will provide desalinated water with a balanced composition of minerals as well as chemical and biological stability.

Optiqua Technologies sets up new R&D centre

Singapore-based Optiqua Technologies Pte Ltd, an optical biosensor solutions company, will establish a new research centre at PUB's WaterHub. Opening in September 2009, the Centre will facilitate Optiqua's R&D activities and product launches.

BUSINESS FORUMS

Seeking cool ideas

Participants at today's India Business Forum may get some cool relief from a hotly-debated issue.

Despite a booming economy and advanced technological capabilities, India struggles to meet its water needs as its urban water demand is set to double, and its industrial demand to triple, by 2025.

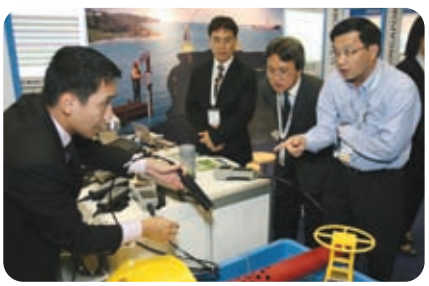
In view of this looming water crisis, the India Business Forum at the Water Week assumes a pivotal role in the search for sustainable water solutions which will be invaluable to incumbents and newcomers in India's water sector.

"The large Indian presence will help to project the country as a modernising nation. This forum offers us an opportunity to interact with world experts to balance out this disparity," said the leader of the Indian delegation, General Joginder Jaswant Singh.

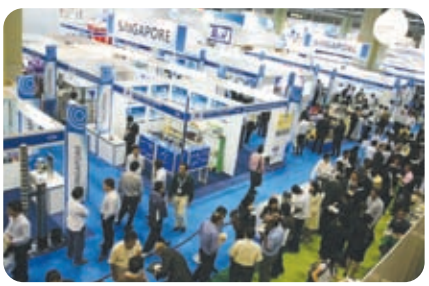
WATER EXPO

Buyers' Pavilion a crowd pleaser

The first-ever Buyers' Pavilion at the Water Expo is abuzz with excitement.



One happy visitor to its booths is Vietnamese Hoang Duc Thao who promises that he will re-visit the tradeshow next year. "Just about everyone in the industry is at the Expo, networking, buying and selling," says Mr Thao, president of urban sewerage company Baria Vungtao.



Securing a place at the Buyers' Pavilion has boosted his company's presence and gained him four wastewater reclamation plant contracts in Vietnam worth more than US$160 million.

Other exhibitors at the Buyers' Pavilion include the Confederation of Indian Industry and Saudi Arabia's National Water Company. Indian corporations and associations have snapped up half the space, and are looking for integrated solutions to various projects.

The Expo is open to the public this afternoon.

Toray pumps S$10 million into its first R&D hub in Southeast Asia

Nanyang Technological University's Nanyang Environment and Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Toray, the world's largest producer of carbon fibre, yesterday inked an MOU to set up an R&D hub for treatment membrane technologies. Under the terms of the MOU, Toray plans to invest S$10 million over the next five years.

Toray Industries' Director Tadahiro Uemura (left) and NEWRI Exec Director Ng Wun Jern ink the deal to set up a water treatment R&D centre in Singapore.

Toray Water Technology Laboratory, the Japanese MNC's first R&D centre in Southeast Asia, will be operational by September 2009. It is set to position Singapore as a global water hub and hopes to fulfil Toray's aim of becoming a leading membrane manufacturer in 2010, particularly in the reverse osmosis membrane market for seawater desalination and used water reclamation.

For its inaugural project, Toray will partner NEWRI to innovate water treatment technologies in the area of membrane fouling mechanism. The joint research will be led by Professor Ng Wun Jern, the Executive Director of NEWRI and an international authority in used water treatment technology.

"Collaborating with industry parties is a good reflection of NEWRI's emphasis on excellent science and our interest to translate cutting-edge environmental and water technologies research results into innovative business solutions that will benefit the industry and society."

Gold with the flow

A water sculpture from Vienna will soon take pride of place in Singapore at the Marina Barrage following a gift presentation ceremony at tonight's Dinner by the Bay. The Gold Flow, a stunning masterpiece by Austrian water sculptor, Hans Muhr, cements close ties between Vienna and Singapore and will be officially unveiled in September.

Activities abuzz

PUB staff clad in ethnic costumes turn on the charm as they greet delegates attending the Southeast Asia Business Forum. A student volunteer uses a novel way to invite trade visitors to the Innovation Corner.

YOUR SAY

What's your personal experience of a day without water?

"Hot, and dry, and dirty - that's how I ended up after camping in Australia. So, I'm a big fan of water, particularly in a glass of Scotch!" ~ Mr Chris Clarke, General Manager, Kingston Bridge Engineering

"I've never experienced that in my life, so I can only imagine that I'd be uncomfortable, because I bathe five times a day!" ~ Mr Tan Ngo Chiaw, Director, CH2M HILL Singapore Pte Ltd

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Endorsed by: aif; Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau

Held in: Uniquely Singapore

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