

## SPORTS

## The harms of turf

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Associated Press Writer

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is looking into the possible health hazards of lead in artificial turf installed at schools, parks and stadiums across the country.

Two fields in New Jersey were closed this week after state health officials detected what they said were unexpectedly high levels of lead in the synthetic turf and raised fears that athletes could swallow or inhale fibers or dust from the playing surface.

The artificial-turf industry denied its products are dangerous. But the CPSC it is investigating.

"We have a great deal of interest into any consumer product that could be used by children where children could potentially be in harm's way because of lead exposure," CPSC spokesman Scott Wolfson said.

The United States has about 3,500 synthetic playing fields made of various materials, including nylon and polyethylene, and about 800 are installed each year at schools, colleges, parks and stadiums, according to the industry's Synthetic Turf Council. Artificial turf was once a luxury reserved for professional sports teams, but its use has exploded in recent years as a way to save costs and reduce water use.

Pigment containing lead chromate is used in some surfaces to make the grass green and hold its color in sunlight. But it is not clear how widely the compound is used. The New Jersey Health Department found lead in both of the nylon fields it tested, but in none of the 10 polyethylene surfaces it examined.

New Jersey found itself at the forefront of the issue after state health authorities stumbled onto the lead while investigating whether runoff from a scrap-metal operation in Newark had contaminated an adjacent playing field.

New Jersey's epidemiologist, Dr. Eddy Bresnitz, said fibers and dust created through wear and weathering might become airborne, where they could be inhaled or swallowed.

But Rick Doyle, president of the Synthetic Turf Council, said the lead is fixed in place in the nylon and does not leach out, and thus poses no health risk. He also said that in recent years, manufacturers have begun offering lead-free nylon surfaces.

"In the 40 years that synthetic sports turf has been in use in the United States and around the world, not one person has ever reported any ill effects related to the material composition of the fibers," he said.

Bresnitz has ordered additional tests on how easily fibers and particles from artificial turf can be swallowed or inhaled. He said the risk from playing on a lead-impregnated field is probably very low. Nonetheless, he suggested washing thoroughly after play, laundering clothes separately and wetting down fields to keep the dust and fibers down during play.

Two fields in New Jersey - Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken and a playing surface at the College of New Jersey in Ewing - were voluntarily closed after state health officials found up to 10 times the amount of lead that is allowed in soil on contaminated sites that are being turned into homes. The government has no standard for how much lead is allowable in artificial turf.

A city-owned field in Newark was closed last fall after similar test results; officials there are replacing the surface.

Fibers don't break off easily on nylon fields, according to Dr. Davis Lee, a Georgia Tech professor and consultant to turf manufacturers. He said even if fibers were to come loose, the lead pigment particles still would not fall out.

Artificial soccer, baseball and football fields are popular because they are durable and eliminate the need for watering, pesticides and mowing. Costs start at about \$300,000 and go up depending on the type of turf, the size of the field and other factors.

## 2008 Olympics protested

## Olympic flame carried through a quiet New Delhi

By TIM SULLIVAN  
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NEW DELHI (AP) - Authorities sealed off the center of their normally frenetic capital Thursday with 15,000 police to protect the Olympic torch relay from anti-China protesters who held their pro-Tibet demonstrations elsewhere in India.

By the time the torchbearers had traversed the shortened New Delhi route of the round-the-world relay, protesters had come nowhere near the Olympic flame - and only a few hundred selected guests had managed to see it at all.

Security was among the tightest ever in central New Delhi, with rings of protection - first, Chinese in blue tracksuits; then, Indians in red ones - surrounding torchbearers as they jogged from the presidential palace to the India Gate monument, which commemorates India's dead in World War I.

India has the world's largest community of Tibetan exiles, many of whom see the torch relay ahead of this summer's Beijing Olympics as an important stage to protest Chinese rule over Tibet. Thousands held a peaceful mock torch relay earlier Thursday elsewhere in New Delhi, and protests were also held in other Indian cities, including Mumbai, where 25 people who tried to storm the Chinese consulate were detained.

Much of New Delhi's leafy British colonial-era center - the administrative heart of India, home to Parliament and government ministries - was closed to traffic and pedestrians. Streets were sealed for blocks around the route, which had been sharply cut back to about two miles by worried organizers and

officials.

The route left the 70 runners, who ranged from athletes like tennis star Leander Paes to Bollywood celebrities, able to jog for just a few seconds before handing the flame to the next person.

Several buses of police followed the runners along the route, where the crowds amounted to little more than a couple hundred young people sitting on bleachers

When trouble did break out Thursday, police quickly brought it under control.

Small groups of protesters repeatedly emerged from side streets a few blocks from the

25, who works in a call center.

The Olympic flame, which began its worldwide six-continent trek from Greece on March 24, has been the focus of protests over China's human rights record.



wearing T-shirts of a torch relay sponsor, Coca-Cola, and a couple hundred

Beijing 2008



members of India's Chinese community.

The televised scenes of the sparse streets, though, were clearly outweighed by the Indian authorities' desire to avoid the chaos of torch runs in London, Paris and San Francisco.

relay route, many shouting "Free Tibet!" and scattering pamphlets, but were hustled away by police.

Authorities refused to disclose how many people were arrested.

"We feel humiliated," said Tashi Dhundup, 32, a Tibetan exile who runs a shop in New Delhi, speaking at a prayer rally after the torch relay. "All Tibetans feel very bad about the government decision not allowing us near the parade route."

Sitting nearby, though, another protester acknowledged India's dilemma.

"We understand that the Indian government had to do these things to keep good relations with China," said Tenzin Tashi,

The turmoil over the torch relay and the growing international criticism of China's policies on Tibet and Darfur have turned the Olympics - which begin Aug. 8 - into one of the most contentious in recent history.

The torch arrived in Thailand Friday and was quickly taken to a hotel pending the relay. Up to 2,000 police will guard the route, which authorities say could be changed at the last minute to avoid disruption by protesters. News reports said about 30 pro-China supporters greeted the torch at the airport.

India is home to the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan spiritual leader, as well as the Tibetan government

in exile, and Indian officials are trying to forge closer ties with the Chinese after decades of frosty relations.

Still, the country saw a number of protests Thursday.

Some two dozen Tibetan exiles chanted anti-China slogans and protested along a busy highway after the flame arrived early in the day.

Several were detained.

In Mumbai, India's financial capital, police detained about 25 Tibetans who attempted to breach the barricades around the Chinese Consulate.

The protests also reached the Indian Himalayan region of Ladakh, which borders Tibet, and at least 5,000 exiles and local Buddhists chanted "Free Tibet!" and "Down with China!" as they marched through Leh, the region's main city, said M.K. Bhandari, a senior local official.

Thousands of Tibetans also participated in the mock torch run in New Delhi.

It began with Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh prayers at the site where Indian pacifist Mohandas Gandhi was cremated. The torch was then lighted and Tibetans put on a show of traditional dancing.

Several dozen prominent Indians joined the Tibetans, who marched a few miles without incident.

In neighboring Nepal, police detained more than 500 Tibetan exiles who protested near the Chinese Embassy in the capital Katmandu and shouted "Free Tibet," police said.

A number of Indian athletes and entertainers withdrew from the Olympic torch run in recent days, although most blamed injuries or scheduling conflicts.

Indian Olympic Association President Suresh Kalmadi used his speech at the relay's end to praise those who did join.

"Those athletes that have carried the torch today have done their duty towards the Olympics and their country," he said.



Photo by DIANA LE/Capital Times

The baseball team held their home opener on March 30, the first time playing on the new field. Pictured here is Austin Kulp, Garrett Piper and Logan Zugay, celebrating another homerun. The game ended with a win for Penn State Harrisburg, the final score being 19-7. The PSH baseball team currently has a 6-2 home record, and are ranked first in the NEAC. Their next game is away at Keystone college this Wednesday.