



Concerns of shipbreaking industry

Why in news?

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India has made a draft legislation to set Labour Safety and Environment Benchmarks for ship breaking.

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What are the impacts of shipbreaking?

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- Shipbreaking is a process of breaking down a ship, when it completes its life tenure..
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- It is one of the most hazardous jobs in the world because most ships are used to carry radioactive materials, toxic wastes, extremely poisonous chemicals and oil.
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- It directly affect the health of the workers, hundreds of manual labourers move onto the beach to dismantle each ship.
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- Many ship breaking yard has poor working and living conditions, workers face many serious work-related injuries.
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- It is also an environmental time bomb as workers strip the ships marooned on the sea shore.
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- Which leads to severe contamination of the sea bed, eventually seeping into the marine food chain.
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What is the account of shipbreaking industries in India?

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- In 2016, India dismantled over 300 ships, against about 220, 140 and 70 in the case of Bangladesh, Pakistan and China.

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- Alang in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, considered the world's largest shipbreaking facility.

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- Alang houses at least 50 companies in 'plots' along a 12-14 km stretch along the sea coast, employing an estimated 40,000 workers.

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- There are no reliable records on accident deaths, but practical narrative estimates that for each day one worker dies for dismantling a ship.

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What is the significance of the draft law?

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- India, which along with Bangladesh dismantles most of the world's discarded ships, has drafted a legislation to set benchmarks for shipbreaking.

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- The proposed law is aligned with the Hong Kong convention adopted by the International Maritime Organisation in 2009.

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- Which is so far ratified by Norway, Congo, France, Belgium, Panama and Denmark.

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What are the areas yet to be addressed by the draft?

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- Ships in India and Bangladesh are dismantled on the beach rather than on dry docks, which adds to the toxicity of the soil, water and air.

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- 'Beaching' is banned under EU regulations, while the Hong Kong convention pushes for clean beaching practices.

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- Hong Kong convention is yet to be addressed by 15 countries with accounts for 40% of world's merchant shipping capacity.

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- Greece and Germany are top offenders in outsourcing their vessels to be beached.
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- Efforts to clean up the industry should include bringing such grey activities under the scanner.
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Source: Business Line

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Quick Fact

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International Maritime Organisation

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- It is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.
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- Its main role is to create a regulatory framework for the shipping industry that is fair and effective, universally adopted and universally implemented.
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- It is headquartered in London, there are 172 member states of the IMO, which includes 171 of the UN member states plus the Cook Islands.
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