

India ratifies Hong Kong Convention on ship recycling

India has ratified the International Maritime Organization's Hong Kong Convention on ship recycling, becoming the first south Asian country to do so. However, the ratification still requires another vote of confidence to enter into force

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INDIA has ratified the International Maritime Organization's Hong Kong Convention on ship recycling, becoming the first recycling country to do so and bringing it closer to ratification.

The IMO HKC was designed to set environmental and safety standards for ship recycling and was adopted by the IMO in 2009.

The convention can only enter into force 24 months after ratification by 15 states representing no less than 40% of the world fleet's tonnage and a combined maximum annual ship recycling volume of no less than 3% of their combined tonnage.

So far, around 13 states have ratified the convention including Malta, Germany and Panama.

“By this accession, what we bring in is environment protection, and workers’ safety are all going to get greater importance,” the Indian cabinet committee on economic affairs said.

The Government of India has decided to enact a bill, namely Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019, to provide for the regulation of recycling of ships by setting certain international standards and laying down the statutory mechanism for enforcement of such standards.

The bill includes restrictions against the installation and use of hazardous materials, the need to obtain authorization to operate and import ships for recycling, ship-specific Ship Recycling Plans to be prepared for incoming vessels.

“When the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 comes into force, its provisions will be implemented under the provisions of the Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and rules and regulations framed thereunder,” the cabinet committee added.

Cash buyer GMS's chief executive Anil Sharma said: “I am delighted by the decision made by the Indian Government and this truly is another hallmark moment towards the accession of the Hong Kong Convention by the largest ship recycling destination in the world today.”

“With this giant step, the Indian Government has ensured that not only on the micro-end, will the industry continue to operate while keeping worker health and the safety of the environment at heart, but on the macro-end, a growing number of ship owners seeking statement of compliance based green-recycling options can be certain that the authorities have added another layer of security for their incoming vessels.”

As a result, this Bill eases the restrictions on non-EU yards that are currently imposed by the EU regulation, Mr Sharma added.

“India being the world’s largest ship recycling destination demonstrated its leadership by deciding to accede to Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 and thus, became first major ship recycling country to unlock the key to support quick ratification of HKC,” commented Anand Hiremath, GMS's Alang-based lead coordinator for Responsible Ship Recycling

“This added layer of international recycling standard will boost confidence of ship owners further to continue recycling their end-of-life vessels in India ensuring safety of workers and environment. It is noteworthy that more than 77 (65%) ship recycling yards voluntarily upgraded their ship recycling yards to comply with HKC standards and are certified with Statement of Compliance by many classification societies,” he added.