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Printed By Anil Sharma

## Indian ship recycling yards resume operations

*After almost a month-long complete lockdown of the country, ship recycling yards in India reopen. The government advises shipbreakers to strictly monitor workers before allowing them into the yards*

22 Apr 2020 | **NEWS**

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TEMPERATURE SCREENING AT LEELA SHIP RECYCLING YARD.

SHIP recycling activities in India — home to some of the biggest shipbreaking yards in the world — have resumed after almost a month, following a complete standstill when India announced a nationwide lockdown to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

However, the resumption of ship recycling activities is being strictly monitored through mandatory thermal screening, social distancing, handwashing at regular intervals and with adequate personal protective equipment for all workers.

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In case of any suspected infection, the government has advised shipbreakers to hand over the worker to Gujarat Maritime Board's quarantine facilities or local health authorities with information passed on to relevant authorities as a priority.

GMS chief executive Anil Sharma believes social distancing can be easily maintained by workers while torching ships because there is always a safe distance when they work on a ship, with all of them performing different tasks.

"Reopening will take place in a slow and methodical manner, and only once it is absolutely safe to do so," cash buyer GMS said.

There are no cases of the virus reported in Alang in India — a major worldwide centre for ship breaking — so far. Meanwhile, GMS said the resumption of work at the Alang ship recycling yards is expected to mean steel plates are stockpiled because the majority of plates are transported to different nations, which have currently sealed their borders.

It is the first time in history that all recycling locations were closed for the foreseeable future, stifling scrap prices in the run up to Ramadan.

A backlog of vessels continues to idle outside all subcontinent locations, with contracts and cancelling dates being frustrated by this unprecedented crisis.

The monsoon season and the start of the holy month of Ramadan will further dampens demolition activity in the Indian subcontinent.

Activities in Bangladesh and Pakistan are likely to restart on April 25 and May 5.