



TO OUR READERS AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATES IN THE INDUSTRY:

GMS RESPONSE TO RECENT BBC ARTICLE

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) recently published a news article about the UK cruise ships scrapped in India's graveyard. In this article, the **BBC** attempts to propagate biased opinions about the ship recycling industry in India. After reviewing the misleading information and erroneous views of the ship recycling industry in India by the BBC, we are required to address some falsified items stated in the report.

World's largest ship graveyard

BBC has described Alang, a coastal village in Gujarat, as "**The world's largest ship graveyard**". However, Alang is the largest green ship recycling destination preferred by global ship owners for recycling of their end-of-life vessels for the following reasons:

1. Major blue-chip ship owners from Japan, Norway, Denmark, Italy, and other developed nations have visited, inspected, audited, and vetted the recycling facilities at Alang. Based on the facts observed at Alang, they have been sustainably recycling their vessels in India. Japanese shipowners' association and the Danish shipowners' association representatives have visited and vetted the recycling facilities to their satisfaction.
2. More than 1000 foreign nationals have visited the Alang to diagnose the difference between facts and opinions spread about the ship recycling at Alang. These visitors are none other than the ship owners, classification society representatives, auditors, safety inspectors, diplomats, capital providers, delegates from international banks and pension funds, etc.
3. The infrastructure consists of impermeable floors, fire-fighting arrangements, application of heavy-duty cranes, training to workers, effective hazardous waste management, etc.
4. At present there are 92 out of 120 (77%) yards are **Hong Kong Convention** compliant and received Statement of Compliance (SOC) from leading classification societies. The classification societies include **ClassNk, Lloyd's Register, RINA, and Indian Register of Shipping**. They all are members of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) who are the Recognized Organizations (ROs) for implementing various international conventions on behalf of flag states.
5. The Government of India has appointed the **Directorate General of Shipping** as an apex body to oversee India's ship recycling activities. The Government of India ratified the Hong Kong Convention in Nov 2019 to promote ship recycling at Alang. India is the only country in South East Asia to ratify the Hong Kong Convention. In addition,

as Alang is in Gujarat province, the activities at Alang are further supervised by the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB).

Alang is a stretch of muddy beach

The remark made in the article about Alang being 'a stretch of muddy beach' is merely incorrect and out of context.

1. Alang is blessed with the natural sea front of a hard-rocky bottom with a slope of 15 degrees. This makes it convenient to deliver the vessel to the recycling yards along the side of the sea front.
2. Alang is not a muddy beach, but it's a complete ecosphere of the recycling yards, backyards, neighboring villages, steel mills, spare parts warehouses, and yard workers.
3. It is a notable example of how recycling of end-of-life vessels becomes a green circular economy. More than 700 shops sell materials recovered from the recycled vessels. These materials include unused spare parts, old machinery & equipment, cutlery, furniture, special tools, etc.
4. The steel plates extracted from the vessels are used in the adjacent steel re-rolling mills. Alang is the place where the end-of-life of vessels is given reincarnation. Studies done on the CO2 emissions in the recycling process show that the emissions can be reduced by at least by four times than extracting a similar amount of steel from raw iron ore. Recycling helps to reduce CO2 emissions which is the primary concern of global warming
5. With the impact of Covid-19 and the global recession, the recycling industry is generating employment opportunities.

Asbestos Bomb:

The BBC article mentions that any vessels recycled at Alang are asbestos bombs. It is critical to understand how the asbestos, asbestos containing material (ACM), and other hazardous wastes generated during the ship recycling process are removed and disposed of at Alang.

1. Alang has developed the infrastructure to dispose of asbestos in an environmentally friendly way.
2. The workers use adequate PPE, which comprises helmets, safety glasses, masks, hand gloves, safety shoes, boiler suits, and disposable overalls while removing and packaging asbestos.
3. The asbestos is solidified and stabilized with cement and water, converting it into solid cubes and disposed of into engineered landfill at GEPIL (with HDPE geo liner and multiple layers of solids).
4. Trained workers with adequate PPE also handle other hazardous materials like lead. They are disposed of to only authorized recycling vendors.

Pumping of waste into the sea and burning the materials on the shore

Furthermore, the BBC article mentioned the worker's statement that the oil and other wastes thrown to sea are completely baseless and merely opinion-based.

1. It is essential to know that oil is used as resalable material. There is no cost-benefit of the oil being thrown into the sea. There are a solid infrastructure and SOPs to collect the oil, bilge water, and various types of wastes generated during recycling facilities.
2. Each type of waste is collected, quantified, and disposed of as per the environmental standards. Recycling facilities have developed segregated storage facilities within the yard to store segregated wastes for a temporary period
3. The law prohibits the burning of oil along with other waste in the recycling facilities. The license issued to yards for recycling vessels is suspended if any yard is observed violating the rule.

Medical Facilities at Alang:

The BBC article criticizes the Alang for having inadequate medical facilities. However, it is crucial to note that Alang has 3 hospitals within the cluster of recycling yards.

1. Alang Hospital, located at South Side Road, Alang, Gujarat 364150, India.
2. GMB multispeciality hospital Alang, located at South Side Road-Alang, Alang, Gujarat 364150, India.
3. Redcross Hospital of Alang, located: Near Mahadev Temple, South Side Road-Alang, Alang, Gujarat, 364150, India.
4. Recently, **GMB** has granted USD 1.3 Million (INR 9,00,00,000) for upgradation of medical facilities, including a trauma center.

Recycling vessels pollute the beaches:

As a specialized body established under the Government of India's **National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act**, NGT is equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental issues. NGT has also ordered the development of recycling facilities along the coast of the Alang. It approved the 'Beaching' method of ship recycling. It observed that the recycling at Alang would not affect the environment much as claimed by different international NGOs with biased opinions.

Conclusion:

Ship recycling in India is a convincing example of the Green Circular Economy. The Government of India has determined to double the capacity of ship recycling at Alang by developing infrastructure and enforcing regulatory measures. Therefore, comments in **BBC's** article about Alang being '**India's ship graveyard**' are entirely unverified.

We hope that this release has helped to foster a better understanding of the present status of ship recycling in Alang and that readers recognize the importance of taking the time to understand recycling industry facts vs. biased opinions.

BBC should do responsible journalism and not just publish scripts without fact-checking. The prejudiced opinions do not affect the sustainable growth that is taking place in Alang. In addition, the Government of India is planning to double ship recycling capacity by the year 2024.

At GMS, we pride ourselves as being responsible leaders in an industry vital to the shipping supply chain. Over the years, we have made it our mission to improve the safety and quality of working and living standards across the industry. The advancements that have been made in the environmental standards and long-term sustainability throughout the ship recycling industry and in the geographic areas that house it has been immense, and GMS considers it an honor to be at the forefront of these developments.

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For further inquiries, please contact us at info@gmsinc.net

ABOUT GMS

Founded in USA, GMS is the world's largest Buyer of ships and offshore units for recycling. GMS has successfully negotiated several thousand assets since its inception – more than any other company in the world! For more than a decade, GMS has led the industry by the sheer volume of transactions and innovative products. The firm's mission is to simplify the disposal and recycling processes in the maritime world by providing end-to-end solutions, sustaining an asset's residual value while simultaneously improving international health, safety and environmental standards. With nine international offices, an award-winning Responsible Ship Recycling Program, and a team of specialized experts, GMS continues to influence positive change in the global maritime and offshore industry.