

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The Indian Shiprecycling Industry at Alang has long been the subject of discussions with several leading publications claiming that this Industry has the 'highest rate of casualties and an absolute violation of human rights occur at the shiprecycling yards'.

Asian recycling yards have come a long way both in terms of infrastructure and quality and you would be surprised to learn that at the time of our last survey in Alang in early June 2007, there were 45 yards that held ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certifications with an additional 10 yards pursuing them. Additionally, 12 of these yards were ISO 9001 Certified.

As the photos show, today's workers wear solid roof helmets, high shoes with tough PVC soles and gloves. They have undergone basic and advanced training in their relevant areas of work, which is certified by a recognised training institute and the GMB. Equipment used at the yards to recycle vessels are in accordance with the Basel convention.

As regards our own background, GMS (USA) is the largest and ONLY ISO 9001 certified cash buyer of vessels for recycling in the world today. We have negotiated more than 800 vessels for recycling over the last 16 years and averaged nearly 100 ships per year for five of the last seven years.

Today, thanks to our longevity in our line of work and experience with this industry, GMS has developed the first "green recycling" programme for the Indian sub-continent after investing more than \$100,000 of its own funds in studying the problems and identifying solutions for safe and responsible green recycling practices. Through a company called Global Ship

Recycling Solutions, LLC (GSR), GMS has developed solutions consistent with IMO, ILO and Basel guidelines.

Latest statistics from the Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) show that 131 vessels have been beached since January 1, 2007 at Alang, where there are a total of 173 yards. During subsequent recycling activities there were a mere two worker fatalities and another six non-fatal accidents, figures we consider to be exemplary considering the onerous tasks involved. We challenge ANY other industry to match these statistics.

Clearly emphasis on the quality and timely education of workers and ISO certification of yards has greatly contributed to the above figures.

Best regards
 Shashank Agrawal / Legal Advisor
 GMS (USA)
 As Agents Only

