
Indian ship breakers oppose IMO convention on recycling

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Exim News Service reported that a majority of Shipbreakers in the country are opposed to the union government ratifying the latest International Maritime Organization convention on ship recycling.

According to the recycling industry players, the IMO convention contains some controversial clauses, a few of which may lead to the very closure of the ship breaking industry. The players had voiced their concerns at the second national workshop of the IMO, held here in February 2009 to finalize the draft of the convention. Despite the promise to incorporate necessary changes, they feel, the convention was adopted without the necessary changes at the diplomatic conference held in Hong Kong in May 2009.

Mr PS Nagarsheth president of the Iron Steel Scrap & Shipbreakers Association of India said that "The industry is totally against the convention. We, along with our colleagues, are planning how to protest."

According to Mr Nagarsheth, there are 3 primary issues. The Indian submission about gas free for hot work was not accepted. The gas free for hot work certification is very important from the point of avoiding adverse impact on environment resulting from oil seepage and also from the point of workers safety.

Secondly, the clause on entry of a force is not very specific and cumbersome. Also, the tone of the convention is against the beaching method, but it is not spelt out. In beaching, ships are dumped at high tide and then allowed to drift to beaches to be taken apart. This is a practice that environmental and rights groups want the IMO to ban. Most of the developed countries practice the floating method for ship breaking.

He said if the beaching method is not accepted, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh will all have to close down their ship breaking activities, and this could happen within 5 years.

According to shipbreakers in Alang, India's regulations are even stricter than IMO guidelines.

(Sourced from Exim News Service)

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