



SOUTH ASIA QUARTERLY UPDATE

Update on shipbreaking in South Asia from
the NGO Shipbreaking Platform

16 January 2015 | #4

In this quarterly publication, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform informs about the shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Providing an overview of vessels broken on the beaches of South Asia, accidents, recent on-the-ground, legislative and political developments including our activities in South Asia, we aim to inform the public about the negative impacts of substandard shipbreaking practices as well as positive steps aimed at the realisation of environmental justice and the protection of workers' rights. In this edition of the update we inform amongst other about the Danish ship CLIPPER CONCORD sold for breaking to India; a report on the working conditions in Alang; and draw a comparison between Bangladesh's shipbuilding and shipbreaking industry. In 2014, 657 ships were sold for breaking on the beaches of South Asia. The death toll due to accidents for 2014 was at least 23 shipbreaking workers – as accidents are not always reported, and many more workers also die of diseases such as cancer, the actual number however is expected to be higher.

OPINION FROM SOUTH ASIA:

“Pakistan is in dire need of a set of rules to regulate the activities in the shipbreaking yards in Gadani. The yards operate in gross violation of various environmental and labour law provisions. The harsh working conditions of the workers are further perpetuated by the absence of a strong trade union network to ensure the protection of workers. Strong trade unions are considered the front line negotiator with the employers on behalf of workers and they can bring issues to the labour courts. The Gadani shipbreaking yards are characterized by the absence of infrastructure, technology and procedures to allow for better working conditions and adequate environmental protection including hazardous waste management systems. The lack of these systems is a gross violation of international environmental law and the Balochistan Environmental Protection Act 2012.

The current government, especially the Chief Minister of Balochistan, has shown great interest in addressing these issues and regulating shipbreaking activities in line with domestic laws. To do so, Pakistan should seek cooperation with all stakeholders in designing a policy and new rules for ship recycling that will ensure an industry move away from the beaching method. This should also include public investments in new techniques and methods of ship recycling.

As a next step, the NGO Shipbreaking Platform and the Centre for Rule of Law, Islamabad are going to organize a one-day seminar in Balochistan's capital city, Quetta, to discuss green ship recycling and possible future developments with lawyers, Government officials, trade unions and yards owners.”



Muhammad Majid Bashir
Centre for the Rule of Law, Islamabad, Pakistan

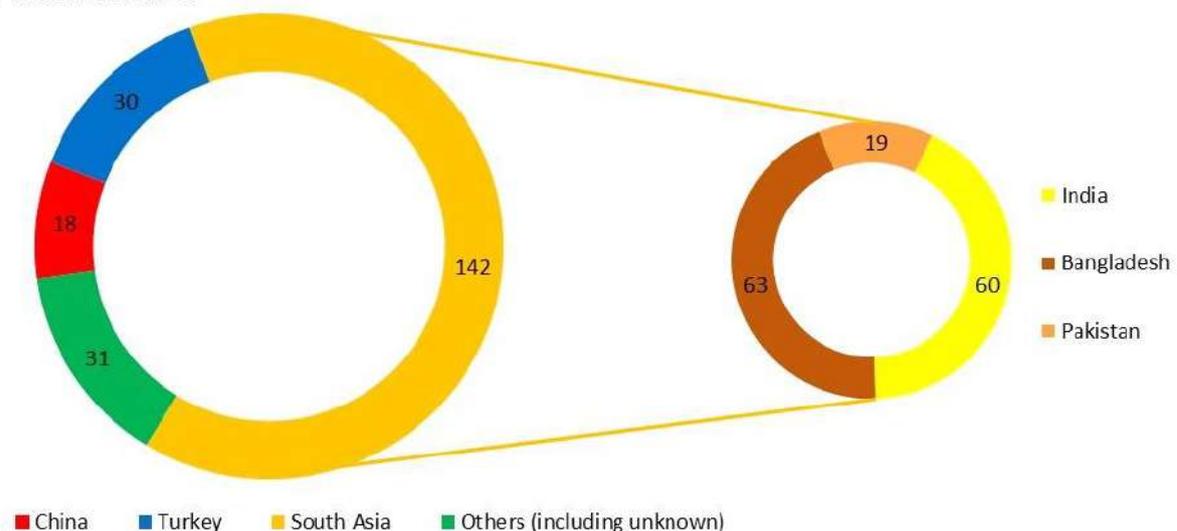
Picture: Muhammad Majid Bashir and Malik Baloch, Chief Minister of Balochistan

OFF THE BEACH !

Out of 221 vessels sold for breaking during the last quarter of 2014 approximately two thirds ended up on the beaches of South Asia. 44 of these ships were owned by European ship owners. Of the 20 ships sold for breaking by Greek owners 19 ended up in South Asia. All, but one, of the German owned vessels sold for breaking also ended up on the South Asian beaches. Chinese owners sold almost half of their end-of-life ships to South Asian yards. Despite the new EU law out-ruling the use of the beaching method to dismantle EU flagged vessels, ships registered under the flags of Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Italy hit the beaches – more ships also changed their flag from an EU to a non-EU flag just weeks before reaching South Asia. Amongst the

worst dumpers this quarter were repeat offenders such as Swiss based MSC, German RICKMERS, Monaco based ZODIAC (former SAMMY OFER), and Greek ELMIRA and G-BULK. Several ships were illegally sold for breaking in South Asia whilst sailing in European waters, including the MV Discovery – sister ship to the “Love Boat” PACIFIC PRINCESS – reportedly sold ‘as is’ for 5 million dollars to Indian breakers, and two of the three ships owned by Italian IGNAZIO MESSINA sold to South Asian breakers. Flags of convenience (FOCs) such as *Saint Kitts-Nevis*, *Comoros* and *Tuvalu*, that are less favoured during operational use, were excessively popular flags for the end-of-life ships broken in South Asia. Bangladesh replaced India as number one destination for end-of-life ships this quarter.

221 ships broken worldwide in Oct-Dec 2014



THE CLIPPER CONCORD – “GREEN RECYCLING” IN INDIA ?

In December, the Platform learnt that Danish ship owner Clipper Group A/S had sold the vessel CLIPPER CONCORD for breaking in Alang, India. The Platform was quick in alerting the CEO of Clipper, Kristian Mørch, that the breaking of the CLIPPER CONCORD in Alang would not meet international and European requirements for environmental protection, nor standards for safe and decent working conditions. The case was covered by the Danish press, most prominently by *Extra Bladet*, Denmark’s largest daily newspaper. Contrary to many Danish ship owners that are committed to responsible ship recycling off the beach, the Clipper Group opted for a higher profit margin by selling the CLIPPER CONCORD to a substandard shipbreaking yard in Alang - a decision which furthermore stands in sharp contrast to the CLIPPER CONCORD’s long-time charterer Thorco Shipping, whose owner Christian Stadil is an outspoken promoter of ethical business in Denmark.

The Clipper Group defended themselves by claiming that the vessel was sold via cash buyer GMS to a newly opened yard named “Sarvag” where they were promised ‘green ship recycling’ in accordance with the IMO’s Hong Kong Convention. The vessel finally ended up at another Alang shipbreaking yard, “Leela”, which is run by GMS CEO Anil Sharma’s brother. The GMS ‘green ship recycling program’ is a green-washing marketing stunt which is not substantiated by any independent verification. The necessary improvements to ensure environmentally sound and safe ship recycling are still lacking in the ship recycling facilities GMS promotes in South Asia. Clipper was promised ‘green recycling’ – here are the reasons why Clipper has been misled:

BEACHING IS NOT GREEN

Ships can only be recycled in a sustainable way in modern ship recycling facilities off the beach. All shipbreaking facilities in India currently operate on tidal beaches. In Alang, ships can not be broken afloat (pier-side demolition) where the ship's bottom can be brought either in a slipway or a floating dock, nor is there any facility in Alang where ships can be landed and broken down on a contained area with a functioning draining system (landing method). "Leela", despite promoting itself as a 'green ship recycling' facility, is a typical Alang shipbreaking yard that operates on a tidal beach. Primary cutting takes place in the intertidal zone where the ship's hull will be cut vertically and the cut-off blocks will be dropped and dragged up to the beach. Pollutants, including residue oils and toxic paint chips, are released to the sediments and sea water and washed out by the tides. The latter makes it of no use to dredge and clean-up the area later. No cranes can be safely operated in the intertidal zone during primary cutting, thus large steel parts will crush in an uncontrolled manner onto the beach. The gravity method of course needs a soft sandy landing as it would smash concrete and drains. The gravity method - a high energy release without control - is at least poor working practice, at worst deadly. In 2014, the Platform registered 4 deaths and 2 serious injuries in Alang related to the gravity method, e.g. workers crushed by falling steel plates. As accidents are not officially documented, it is likely that many more workers have been injured. Lastly, in cases of accidents, no emergency equipment, be it to extinguish a fire or to haul up a worker trapped in the ship, can reach vessels that are stuck on tidal mudflats. It currently takes many hours for severely injured workers to reach a hospital and many workers risk their own lives trying to save their colleagues. The problems the beaching method faces in the primary cutting zone are not resolved by concrete flooring and drainage systems in the secondary cutting zone, nor by proper storage of the hazardous wastes that have not already been released to the environment.

THE WORKING CONDITIONS ARE POOR IN ALL ALANG YARDS

The dire working and living conditions in Alang concerns all workers, also those working at "Leela". A new report published in December by the most prestigious social science research institution in India, the Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), pointed out that the working and living conditions of all workers in Alang have not fundamentally changed since the industry first started operating in 1983 (see article below). Most workers suffer from a lack of proper accommodation and sanitation and there is currently no adequate hospital or ambulance available for the 35,000 workers at Alang. With what regards the Clipper case, workers at "Leela" reported to members of a delegation from the Indian National Human Rights Commission that they were only handed out protective equipment when outside visitors were expected. It is clear that without compliance with basic rights including housing, sanitation, drinking water, health facilities, fair wages and adequate safety provisions, the Alang yards are still far from ensuring sustainable ship recycling.

CLIPPER: "BUT WE WERE PROMISED GREEN RECYCLING..."

The Alang yards' that claim to provide "green recycling" do so based on self-certification – no independent and reliable certifier or expert has confirmed that a shipbreaking yard in Alang can actually offer green ship recycling in accordance with international standards. No shipbreaking yard in Alang has received a statement of compliance (SOC) with the Hong Kong Convention as no reliable and independent certifier has so far been convinced to issue such a statement for an Indian shipbreaker. Though "Leela" is one of the four Alang yards that has been working with Japanese classification society ClassNK to assess the gaps in order to become 'Hong Kong compliant', ClassNK has refrained from issuing a statement of compliance due to amongst other issues related to the lack of environmental protection in the primary cutting zone. Comparatively, SOCs for the Hong Kong Convention have been given to modern ship recycling facilities in China. The yards with which GMS works to offer 'green ship recycling' have further never disclosed the findings of samples taken to measure pollution. Thus, when Indian shipbreakers claim that they recycle ships in accordance with the principles of the Hong Kong Convention, this happens without any external certification. It should also be noted that the Hong Kong Convention is not in force, thus neither the flag state nor the recycling state, that is India, will enforce the requirements of the Convention and ensure that the facility abides by the law. Reference to the Hong Kong Convention before its entry into force is only misleading – even more so in the light of the TISS findings on working conditions and growing claims that the Alang yards are not in compliance with national environmental requirements. NGOs in India have rightly pointed out that the requirements of the Indian Supreme Court echoing the provisions of the Basel Convention regarding the import of hazardous waste on board end-of-life vessels as well as for hazardous waste management are not met in Alang.

"...AND WE WERE SHOWN CERTIFICATES AND GIVEN THE OPORTUNITY TO CHECK."

Almost all shipbreaking yards in India and Bangladesh display ISO 9001 and ISO 14001. These are not specific to the challenges of clean and safe ship recycling and do not provide any information on the actual performance of a ship recycling facility. For ISO 30000, of which many South Asian yards also boast having obtained, there are no accredited certifiers. The shipbreaking yards have in most cases certified themselves, alternatively with the help of so-called consultants that have little ship recycling expertise. There is common agreement amongst more serious ship recycling stakeholders that the ISO 30000 standard has been completely devalued by its extensive display in most of the

substandard yards in India and Bangladesh. As any outsider to Alang needs a special permit to visit the yards, Clipper will not be able to check the operations of “Leela” whilst breaking the CLIPPER CONCORD unannounced. Instead they will be presented with staged situation such as all other delegations visiting Alang have in the past, including the Indian National Human Rights Commission that visited “Leela”. Ship owners will not see the reality of everyday work in Alang.

IS GMS IS A RESPONSIBLE CASH BUYER ?

GMS is the biggest cash buyer in the world and prides itself of having negotiated the demolition of more than 2.000 end-of-life vessels in the last years – the majority of these ships were broken in substandard yards including the worst in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Only a tiny fraction of the ships are channelled through their so called ‘green ship recycling program’ to yards that may be slightly better – e.g. partially cemented secondary cutting zones and smaller cranes – but do not meet the requirements of the Hong Kong Convention, and are even further away from meeting the EU requirements. Indeed, ClassNK’s gap analysis has identified important gaps – gaps that today have not been closed and that will only be possible to close by moving operations off the beach. Most of the yards GMS sells vessels to are not concerned by ‘green ship recycling’, and substandard shipbreaking practices are at the core of the company’s growth. Ship owners should note that there are alternative ‘cash buyers’ and experts that have adopted sustainable ship recycling policies and that will only work with modern ship recycling facilities off the beach – such as Sea2Cradle, Grieg Green and Wilhelmsen Green Recycling Services.

ACCIDENTS

Two major accidents in Gadani yard 107 injuring 15 workers was reported in October and one accident injuring 23 year old Salam was reported to have occurred on M.A Shipbreaking yard in Chittagong 13 December. In 2014 gas explosions were the first cause of injury and death at the shipbreaking yards: 10 workers were reported killed and 24 injured due to tank explosions or intoxication following explosions of cylinders. Falling steel plates crushed and killed seven workers and severely injured four

workers. Another 4 workers fell to their death due to the lack of safety equipment, 2 workers were severely injured. 20 workers were reported injured and 2 killed due to accidents of an unknown nature - it has been impossible for the Platform to get further information to determine the cause of death and injury. The total death toll due to accidents for 2014 was 23 shipbreaking workers – as accidents are not always reported, and many more workers also die of deceases such as cancer, the actual number is expected to be higher.

“WE SHOUTED FOR HELP, BUT NOBODY HEARD US” – NO JUSTICE FOR INJURED WORKERS IN BANGLADESH, CHILD WORKER MAY REMAIN DISABLED

While working on the shipbreaking yard owned by the ARL Group close to Chittagong, 15 year old Ibrahim was struck by a falling steel plate which crushed his leg. The boy and his foreman shouted for help, but nobody heard them for a long time. Now the boy is left at his family’s place and may stay disabled for the rest of his life. Similar to earlier cases reported by the Platform, the family cannot afford a proper operation and Ibrahim is left to hope that the complex fracture will heal under the plaster which covers all of his leg. German international broadcasting service DW has reported his case, including a [video with Ibrahim’s interview](#). It is illegal under Bangladesh’s Labour Act to use children and adolescent workers in hazardous industries such as shipbreaking. However, no yard owner has ever been held responsible for child labour, not even when a child worker is severely injured or has died in a shipbreaking yard.



In our [Update #3](#), we shared the story of the young worker Taslim, who had been severely injured in an accident in Legend Holding shipbreaking yard in July 2014 while dismantling the German-owned vessel MAGDALENE. The yard owner was unwilling to pay for his treatment and Taslim could not afford the urgently needed operation to fix the complex fracture of his leg – he was bound to lie in the family’s hut while the family’s debts were increasing.

While the Platform and its members raised some funds to help Taslim, father of a baby girl, the Platform's local coordinator in Chittagong discussed Taslim's case and the despairing situation of other injured workers with the Labour Department and the Factory Inspection Department. The yard owners are legally obliged under Bangladesh labour law to cover the costs for medical treatment. At the same time, Platform member organization Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer's Association (BELA) sent a letter to the Ministry of Industry, the focal ministry for the shipbreaking industry, to demand better treatment for the injured workers and for the yard management to be held financially responsible. The Government consequently contacted two yards, Kabir Steel and Legend Holding, on behalf of two injured workers, Jashim Uddin and Taslim, reminding the yard managements of their legal duties.

As a reaction to the Government's letter, the manager of Legend Holdings, where Taslim was injured, contacted the family. He complained that the family had talked to journalists and NGOs and threatened Taslim that the yard would file a case against him – a common and effective measure to silence workers that are considered bothersome. Only after further intervention of the Platform's local member organisations, have the yard managers finally agreed to bear the costs of the operations. More than six months after his severe accident, Taslim was finally operated in early January 2015 – the fate of many other injured workers, including 15 year old Ibrahim is still uncertain.

DEVELOPMENTS

REPORT FUNDED BY NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF INDIA REVEALS DIRE WORKING CONDITIONS IN ALANG

The working and living conditions at the shipbreaking yards of Alang, India, remain alarmingly poor, argues a [new study](#) published in the Economic & Political Weekly, a well known Indian Social Science journal. The research was commissioned and financed by the National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) and was coordinated by Dr Geetanjoy Sahu from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). TISS' findings are based on intensive field-work in Alang from April 2013 to May 2014 including interviews with 300 shipbreaking workers as well as industry stakeholders, trade unions and authorities.

The study finds that the *"costs to workers' health and the environment are alarming"* while the profit margins for both the yard owners and the contractors providing the labour force are extremely high. Dr Sahu reports that the approximately 35.000 unorganised migrant workers at Alang continue to live in shanty dwellings without adequate facilities for drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The authorities have set up only 12 showers and six toilets. As a result, *"workers are forced to defecate in the open"*.



Official figures accessed by TISS report at least 470 fatal accidents in the yards since they were first set up in 1983, making shipbreaking one of the most dangerous occupations in India. Indian human rights advocates referred to in the report estimate however that there is a far higher number of victims, especially because the long-term consequence of unsafe shipbreaking activities, including occupational diseases such as cancer are not taken into consideration by the authorities. The report refers to the National Institute of Occupational Health, which had found that 15 out of 94 examined workers showed signs of diseases caused by exposure to asbestos. TISS also highlights their concern that so far no shipbreakers have been held liable for their neglect to ensure safe working conditions.

Around 100 workers are treated every day at the local Red Cross hospital. They show a very high rate of injuries resulting from work at the yards, and a high prevalence of occupational diseases. According to the report, the Red Cross hospital is understaffed and lacks the necessary facilities to treat serious injuries where lives are at stake. A 100-bed hospital will be constructed by the Employee's State Insurances Company for all industries employing more than 25.000 workers. As many workers in Alang are not officially registered by the employers – only around 16.000 are currently registered, i.e. less than half of the workforce – the Alang shipbreaking yards do not benefit from the scheme. Equally alarming is the lack of educational facilities for the migrant workers' children.

The research team also found out that workers are not provided with adequate safety training and protective equipment such as masks, gloves and boots. Workers revealed that in most cases personal protective equipment was only distributed before audits and official visits, such as by the National Human Rights Commission.

In addition to serious health and safety risks, the researchers documented delays in the payments of wages, unauthorised deductions, unpaid leave and overtime payments not in line with legal requirements. TISS also points out the absence of an active and strong trade union representing the interests of migrant workers. Though the Alang-Sosiya Ship Recycling and General Workers' Association formed in 2006 seeks to support the workers, it is confined to individual support rather than collective rights. Many workers shared their fear of losing their jobs if they were to protest against their working and living conditions. What makes the situation more difficult is that many of the local village leaders benefit from the industry, for instance by renting out shacks to workers or selling them drinking water. Thus, the migrant workers also find little support amongst local leaders.

The TISS report highlights that law enforcement by the various central and state government agencies that are involved in the regulatory control of the industry remains weak. The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB), the nodal agency, has been very permissive regarding violation of rules and regulations by shipbreaking yards. Responsible agencies, such as the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health, have been found understaffed and the Inter-Ministerial Committees reduced to symbolic meetings not taken seriously by the Ministry of Steel (which was until recently the focal ministry for the shipbreaking sector) *"as every meeting ends in assurances by the SRIA and implementing agencies to resolve water, sanitation, housing safety, and hospital issues, but nothing significant has so far been done in this direction"*. Dr Sahu points out that this has to be understood in the larger context of *"lopsided development at the cost of human rights and the environment"* under the so-called 'Gujarat model' of development, introduced by the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his tenure as the Chief Minister of the state.

KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD TEMPORARILY CLOSE SILK'S SHIPBREAKING UNIT

As reported in our [Update #3](#) local populations have voiced concerns about the polluting and dangerous practices of shipbreaker Steel Industries Kerala (SILK) operating in two locations in the southernmost state on India's West coast. According to an article in [The Hindu](#), the protesters alleged that the business was beneficial only to an affluent minority and that it should be stopped permanently, taking into account the serious environmental pollution and health hazards being faced by hundreds of residents in the coastal area.

In November, protesters got a temporary relief when the Kerala State Pollution Control Board stopped all dismantling work, after an inspection that found that the

unit started the dismantling work without obtaining proper clearance. The KPCB also found that no sufficient measures were taken to control the pollution and to process hazardous objects. As a consequence, it directed SILK to submit a report in 15 days after having resolved identified security hazards and pollution threats at the unit. In December, a new temporary order to halt practices was issued to the SILK's ship breaking unit at Bepore by the Kozhikode district administration, banning any shipbreaking activity at the site.

GOVERNMENT OF BALOCHISTAN INITIATE WORK ON REGULATION OF THE SHIPBREAKING SECTOR

The Government of Balochistan, the Pakistani province in which the shipbreaking area of Gadani is located, has initiated work to develop further regulation for the sector, in particular with regard to labour issues. The Government has asked the ILO to assist the authorities in an assessment of the working conditions of shipbreaking workers in Gadani. In its 2013 report [Pakistan Shipbreaking Outlook](#), the Platform has already highlighted several labour rights concerns, amongst others the suppression of free trade unions, irregular or no pay for overtime or holidays, a lack of adequate accommodation, sanitation and drinking water and substandard health and safety provisions for workers. Both the Platform secretariat and the Platform's Pakistani members have consulted with the ILO on this issue. Shipbreaking is subject to various labour laws in Pakistan, such as the Factory Act; however, there is a lack of specific regulation as well as enforcement of existing rules.



Regarding environmental aspects, the shipbreaking industry falls under the [Balochistan Environment Protection Act 2012](#). The Act clearly states in Art 16 that nobody is allowed to import hazardous waste in Balochistan. Furthermore, Art 23 foresees special protection of the coastal zone and puts any ship dismantling activity under strict monitoring of the Environment Protection Agency to prevent pollution and environmental degradation. Art 23(2) holds that

shipbreaking activities have to follow the provisions under the Basel Convention including Prior Informed Consent (PIC) for the import of end-of-life vessels. The Act also prescribes that hazardous waste such as asbestos has to be disposed of in an environmentally safe and sound way. Currently asbestos from end-of-life vessels is dumped in unmarked areas behind the shipbreaking yards.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION MEETING IN JAPAN

Trade Union leaders from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan expressed concerns over the working conditions at the South Asian shipbreaking yards at IndustriALL's Global Union World Conference on Shipbuilding – Shipbreaking held in Nagasaki, Japan. The unacceptable safety and health risks workers in Alang, Mumbai, Gadani and Chittagong are forced to endure were discussed and the

fact that trade unionists face repression was highlighted. Platform founder and policy advisor Ingvild Jenssen was invited to share the Platform's experience and position. The IndustriALL Global Unions explored possible synergies between shipbuilding and shipbreaking practices, especially how the former industry experiences can help improve the dire conditions faced by the shipbreaking industry in South Asia and how to strengthen solidarity in the fight against precarious work. An action plan for 2015-2016 was adopted as well as and a Resolution calling on all states to implement existing rules and guidelines to ensure safe and environmentally sound ship recycling. The unions committed to continue supporting the shipbreaking workers' unions, as well as to reach out to the unorganised workers. For more information see website of [IndustriALL](#). Also see story below for lessons learnt by the shipbuilding industry in Bangladesh.

OUR INITIATIVES

VISIT TO MUMBAI SHIPBREAKING YARD



PICTURE: Vidyadhar V. Rane, General Secretary, Alang Soshiya Ship Recycling and General Workers Association; Patrizia Heidegger; Dr. Geetanjoy Sahu, TISS.

In October, the Platform's Executive Director met with various stakeholders around India. Patrizia Heidegger first visited the shipbreaking yards in Mumbai, where she entered some of the yards located inside the Mumbai Port Trust and met with workers who had rallied in protest for decent working conditions. The conditions in Mumbai are alarming: the shipbreaking yards are extremely crowded as they are confined to a rather small area of land. The toxic fumes from cutting the steel plates were thick making it nearly impossible to breathe. Most of the labourers do not wear proper personal protective equipment such as helmets, goggles, gloves, safety boots, overalls and masks to protect their respiratory system. Workers, scrap parts, machine – all are cramped together. There is no proper removal of hazardous waste, adequate storage and safe disposal and destruction of hazardous wastes. The conditions are particularly distressing, as the Indian Government decided to have the aircraft carrier INS VIKRANT demolished in the Mumbai yards. The INS VIKRANT was built during World War II for the British Navy – a vessel of this age is expected to carry larger

amounts of hazardous materials, such as asbestos, for which the Mumbai yards are not equipped nor are its workers trained and adequately appraised. The INS VIKRANT was sold through an online auction in January 2014 and a shipbreaker from Darukhana in Mumbai paid 600,000,000 INR (approx. 7.9 million EUR) in order to dismantle the vessel.

DISNEY FILM PROMOTING DIRTY AND DANGEROUS SHIPBREAKING ?

The Platform has been made aware that the shipbreaking yards in Bangladesh feature in the upcoming Marvel movie "Avengers: Age of Ultron". Though it seems likely that the Chittagong shipbreaking yards will feature in scenes of destruction in the film, the NGO wished to bring to Marvel's attention that shipbreaking yard owners in Bangladesh are using the inclusion of these scenes in a Marvel/Disney production to 'hype' their business. This is especially damaging since child labour and environmental pollution remain utmost serious concerns at their shipbreaking sites. A formal letter was sent to the Companies' Boards, asking Disney to take, in line with its Human Rights policy, a clear position against dangerous and polluting shipbreaking practices as found in Chittagong. Despite the company's elaborate ethical and social policies, the Platform has not yet received any answer from Disney. The trailer can be watched on [youtube](#):



WHAT ELSE ?

A SHOWCASE FOR BANGLADESH: DECENT WORKPLACES MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE SHIPBUILDING YARDS REDUCE ACCIDENT RATE BY OVER 90%

According to the Government of Bangladesh, shipbuilding is one of the export industries of Bangladesh poised for growth. Currently, two ship yards in Bangladesh, Ananda Ship Yards in Narajongj close to Dhaka, and Western Marine in Chittagong, build larger ships for export to ship owners in Denmark and Germany, amongst others.

Western Marine in Chittagong however suffered from a deplorable accident record. Despite a modern yard and good infrastructure, accident rates were alarming. The company thus decided to enter into a public-private partnership with the German Federal Enterprise for International Cooperation (GIZ). Together with occupational health and safety experts, the accident rate at Western Marine came down more than 90%. The keys to success: applying the right procedures and training the workers properly.

Western Marine's success story from an accident-prone work place to a modern ship yard happened in the close vicinity to the shipbreaking yards on the other side of the port city of Chittagong where workers still go barefoot and children and adolescents are employed in hazardous operations. The shipbreaking industry has been unable to reduce accident rates as the yard owners are unwilling to change their methods of breaking down ships and to invest in proper infrastructure and training of the workers. Western Marine has shown that a combination of both the right infrastructure and technology, and the right procedures can create safe and decent jobs in Bangladesh's shipbuilding industry. While the shipbuilding yards have modern docks – shipbreaking still takes place on a muddy beach. The Western Marine example should serve the shipbreaking industry as a role model of how to move towards modern ship recycling practices.

Further reading on the Western Marine success story:

[German Ministry for Development Cooperation - New York Times](#)

FURTHER READING

GERMAN STATE TV ZDF REPORTS ON SHIPBREAKING IN BANGLADESH: ZDF aired a [documentary on shipbreaking in Bangladesh](#), featuring the Platform's Executive Director Patrizia Heidegger, and the local Platform coordinator Muhammed Ali Shahin. The documentary found a worker who was severely injured while dismantling a German-owned ship sent by the Hamburg-based owner Blumenthal and interviewed the family, who was left with debts of medical costs and no income. The journalists met with child workers and their families, revealing that worst forms of child labour remains a serious problem at Bangladeshi shipbreaking yards. The documentary also contains an interview with the fleet manager of Hamburg ship owner Hapag Lloyd who has decided to take full responsibility for clean and safe ship recycling off the beach in modern ship recycling facilities – a sign of hope that ship owners can change the course.

GERMAN INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTER DW REPORTS ON YOUNG SHIPBREAKING WORKERS IN BANGLADESH: Deutsche Well (DW), Germany's international broadcasting service, reported about young shipbreaking workers in Bangladesh. The coverage includes the film [#headabovewater: Call of duty](#) about young workers in the maritime industry.

There is also a video dedicated to young shipbreaking workers [#headabovewater Bangladesh - Breaking bodies, one ship at a time](#). Furthermore, DW published a photo gallery "Chittagong - the graveyard of ships" in both [English](#) and [Bengali](#). The Bengali-language photo gallery has sparked a discussion in Bangladesh on [Facebook](#) on workers' health and safety. DW also published an [interview](#) with the Platform's Executive Director and videos about the case of young [IBRAHIM](#) and [ALAMGIR](#).

MAIL TODAY INDIA REPORTS ON DANGERS OF SHIPBREAKING IN ALANG: Indian newspaper [Mail Today](#) wrote about the environmental risks in Alang, highlighting that the SC order is not followed by the industry. The article quotes Platform board member Ritwick Dutta.

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