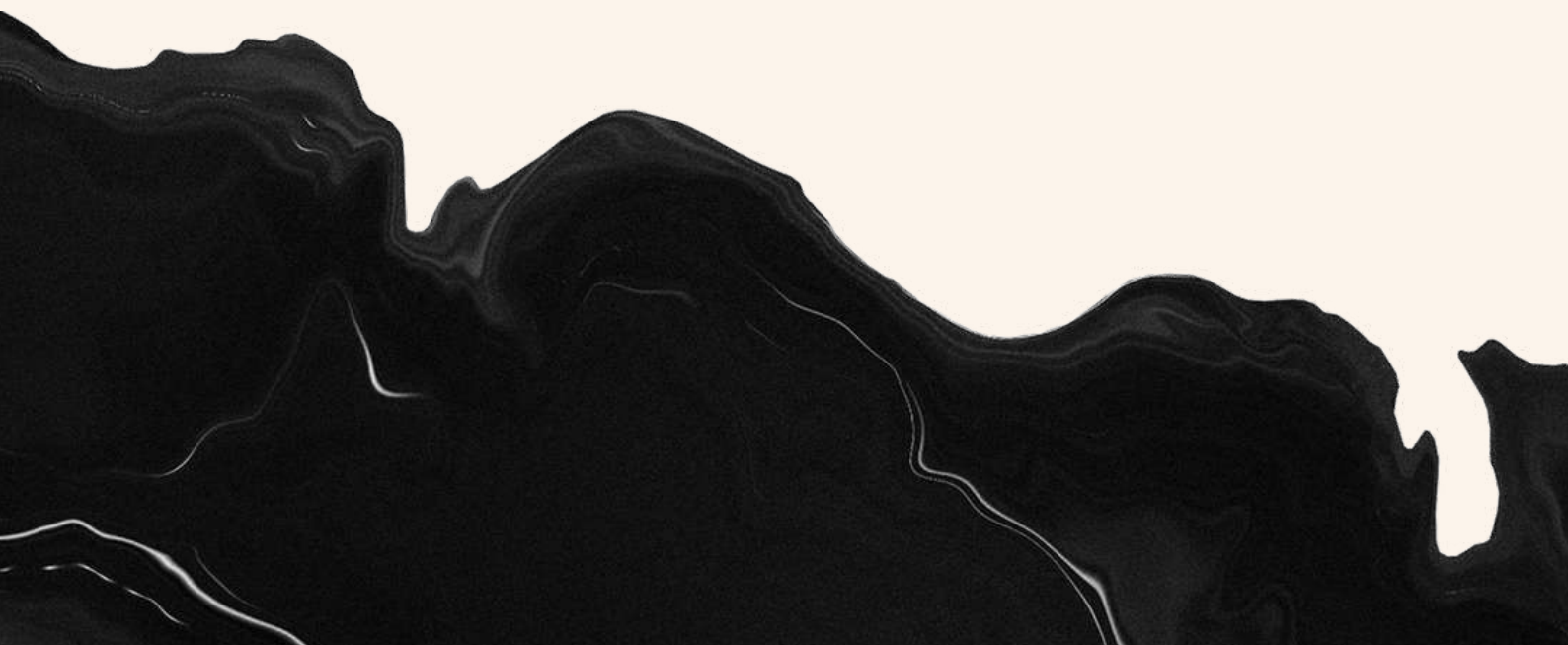


SOUTH ASIA QUARTERLY UPDATE

#37



VISION & MISSION

Vessels are recycled in facilities that ensure clean, safe, and just practices that provide workers with decent jobs. Vessels will be toxic-free and no longer cause harm to workers, local communities, or the environment at end-of-life.

To act as a catalyst for change by effectively advocating for clean, safe, and just ship recycling globally. This necessitates denouncing dirty and dangerous practices, such as the dumping of end-of-life vessels on the beaches of developing countries. Our commitment to finding sustainable global solutions is based on the respect of human and workers' rights and the principles of environmental justice, producer responsibility, 'polluter pays', and clean production.

APRIL 2024
SAQU#37

In this quarterly publication, we inform about the shipbreaking practices in South Asia, providing an overview of accidents that took place on the beaches of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, relevant press media as well as research. We aim to raise public awareness about the many negative impacts of shipbreaking in South Asia as well as developments aimed at the protection of workers' rights and the environment.

*workers suffered an accident
while scrapping ships on
South Asian beaches*

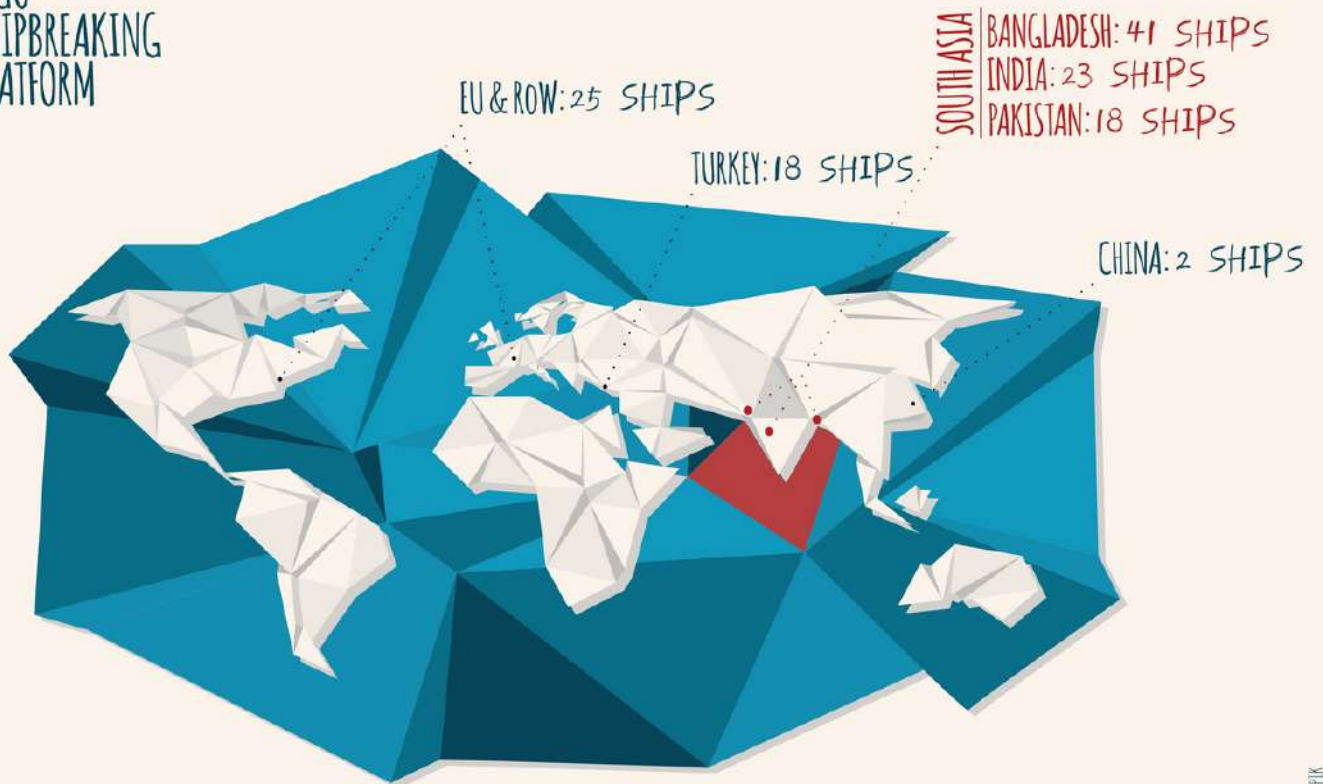
at least
8

*workers suffered an accident
while scrapping ships on
South Asian beaches*



03

SHIPBREAKING RECORDS



TOTAL
 127 SHIPS DISMANTLED WORLDWIDE
 JANUARY - MARCH 2024



ON THE BEACH

OFF THE BEACH

04

ACCIDENTS

Improving safety and transparency in the shipbreaking sector is crucial to prevent accidents and protect workers' well-being. Currently, accidents are reported by the Platform based on local sources and media reports. However, as the sector suffers from a serious lack of transparency, many incidents likely go unreported, particularly in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, where authorities and industry fail to publish data. Moreover, the absence of data on occupational diseases, including cancer, further exacerbates the lack of accountability towards workers and leads to the workers being exposed to toxics unknowingly on a daily basis.

BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, recent accidents highlight the urgent need for improved safety measures. On 18 January, at Master & Brothers yard, two security guards, Ishak and Emron (46), were injured after falling in the engine room of the ship HAO 3 (IMO 9015101), owned by Chinese shipping company Anhui Haohang. Just four days later, Md Farul (32) suffered a broken leg while dismantling the Japanese-owned ship SIGHTER (IMO 8602816) at SN Corporation, a facility which claims to be compliant with the Hong Kong Convention. The vessel was sold to the beaching yard via cash buyer Best Oasis, according to shipping databases.

4 February saw another incident when Rasel (26), working as a cutter man inside the vessel JIN HAI XI (IMO 9105463) at Mahinur Enterprise, injured his backbone when he fell from height. Although Rasel received treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital, the lack of preventive measures is concerning. Similarly, on 3 March, Md Rasel (26) sustained injuries while working at the yard of S.H. Enterprise during the dismantling of MT NAUTICA (IMO 8601848), owned by Malaysian company E.A. Technique Bhd.



MT NAUTICA (IMO 8601848)



05

On 14 March, Mamun (38), another cutter man working on the same ship, was injured when an iron plate fell on his head. While the owner covered his treatment costs, these incidents underscore the need for comprehensive safety protocols and official monitoring to prevent such accidents and protect workers' safety.

PAKISTAN

On 16 January, two workers, Qasim and Mustafa, lost their lives when a heavy iron plate fell onto them while dismantling the ship CATHERINE BRIGHT (IMO 9186924) at Dewan Shipbreaking PVT Ldt (plot 60) in Gadani. According to trade unions, the workers were dismantling the bottom of the ship when a heavy iron plate fell on them. It is claimed that the workers were forced to work on the ship without adequate safety measures. The National Trade Union Federation has long raised concerns that various government agencies, including the police, allow for the sector to operate with impunity, and call for a full investigation of the accident that killed Qasim and Mustafa. There are claims that their bodies were clandestinely buried at night without any post-mortem examination in an attempt to hide the cause of death and protect the contractor and yard owner from liability.

DEVELOPMENTS IN BANGLADESH AND INDIA

BANGLADESH'S SHIPBREAKING INDUSTRY: "NO MORE TOXIC SHIPS ON OUR SHORES"

A recent article in the Bangladeshi media newspaper The Daily Star sheds light on the pressing issue of environmental and labour exploitation in Bangladesh's shipbreaking industry. It underscores the lack of regulatory enforcement in the country, allowing ship owners, particularly from the Global North, and cash buyers to exploit the situation for their own benefits. Concerns related to the use of "last-voyage packages" by ship owners and cash buyers when selling ships to South Asia as a way of disposing of toxic ships without proper scrutiny or accountability, and taking advantage of lax regulations in the country, were raised in the article. Despite the evident risks to workers and ecosystems posed by the shipbreaking industry in Chattogram and yard owners often ignoring existing regulations, little progress has been made in addressing these concerns.

06

Moreover, the article points out that even though Bangladesh's steel re-rolling industry, which heavily relies on scrap steel from shipbreaking, contributes significantly to the economy, Bangladesh only receives 10% of its steel from this sector. Overall, the article highlights the urgent need for stricter regulatory measures and enforcement to protect workers' rights and the environment from the adverse effects of the industry. It also raises concerns about the accountability of both domestic and international stakeholders, including worldwide corporations from the Global North, in ensuring ethical and sustainable practices in ship disposal.

SHIPBREAKING WORKERS PROTESTED FOR EID BONUS IN CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH

On Friday 22 March, shipbreaking workers in Chattogram protested by forming a human chain to demand that yard owners pay wages and bonuses before Eid ul-Fitr, a Muslim celebration. The President of Shipbreaking Workers Trade Union Forum, Tapan Dutta, said that the workers have been illegally deprived from their Eid bonuses for many years, despite the continuous protests. According to the Bangladesh Labour Code, shipbreaking workers are entitled to receive their bonuses, March salary and partial salary of April by this time. The protestors told The Business Standard that “*such bonuses are not mere gifts or favours from employers but are rights protected by the labour law.*”. In general, shipbreaking workers' salaries are not in compliance with the minimum wage approved by the government for the sector in 2018.

IRISH VESSELS SCRAPPED ON THE BEACHES OF BANGLADESH AND INDIA

The scrapping of the vessels THANOS (IMO) and JARVIS (IMO 9197301), both owned by Irish company Trade Credebt Limited, on the beaches of Bangladesh and India has drawn attention from Irish media. In May 2022, the THANOS arrived in Chattogram in Bangladesh, while the JARVIS arrived in Alang, India in June 2022. Ships sailing under an EU flag or trading in EU waters cannot legally be scrapped in the shipbreaking yards of South Asia, as per European Union regulations. Trade Credebt, however, rejected any accountability.

07

SUPPORT SHIPBREAKING WORKERS IN CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH

Since 2009, more than 8000 ships were beached in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan causing at least 449 deaths and 408 injuries. So far this year, local reports have documented at least six workers sustaining serious injuries in Chattogram, Bangladesh, while tragically two workers have lost their lives in Gadani, Pakistan.

Because ships are taken apart on tidal mudflats in South Asia, workers perform dangerous jobs without adequate infrastructure for safe disassembly. Workers in many Bangladesh shipbreaking yards cut wires and pipes, blast through ship hulls with blowtorches, climb multiple stories and haul scrap metal, without adequate protective gear. Many are killed or seriously injured by explosions, crushed by falling chunks of steel, or burned by flammable gases, liquids, and other materials in the ships. Labour in Bangladesh's shipbreaking industry is largely informal, unregulated, and rarely subject to occupational health and safety inspections or controls. Workers are not only subject to unacceptable working conditions but also left with little or no support in case of accidents.

HEALTH CAMP HELD IN CHATTOGRAM, BANGLADESH

On 31 January, a group of 24 shipbreaking workers, who were severely injured at the shipbreaking yards in the past decades, had the opportunity to be screened during a health camp in Sitakunda organised by the NGO Shipbreaking Platform in collaboration with the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP). Workers with spinal injuries and limb amputations were able to receive rehabilitation support from CRP with the logistic costs covered by the NGO Shipbreaking Platform thanks to donations.



08

“

This health camp is good for the workers since there are no problems or hassles to have access to the medical services. We are very happy and grateful to the NGO Shipbreaking Platform.

Md Mamun (25) injured in 2022

”

“

These type of health camps enable workers to get medical service free of cost and the vocational trainings will make them active again.

Workers' leader (41)

”

€30 / \$32

Helps one injured worker to have access to the services provided by the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) in Chattogram Bangladesh

DONATE NOW

by PayPal or by **Bank Transfer**

ING Bank - IBAN: BE 66 3630 0892 4343 - SWIFT/BIC: BBRUBEBB
NGO Shipbreaking Platform, Rue de la Linière 11, 1060 Brussels, Belgium

09

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS

Every year, due to extreme poverty as well as absence of job opportunities in their home villages, a large number of workers from the northern parts of Bangladesh under the district of Bogra, Rangpur and Kurigram move to Sitakunda, Chattogram, to work at the shipbreaking yards. There they are exposed to dangerous conditions risking their lives, their health, and being left with inadequate or no compensation in case of accidents.

In collaboration with CRP, injured shipbreaking workers are now able to take vocational trainings in tailoring, computers, electronics, shop management, industrial sewing and linking machine operator training. These classes will allow the workers to find a sustainable and alternative livelihood away from the hazardous shipbreaking industry.

“

I have benefited from attending the health camp. I joined without any costs. A special work training program would also be beneficial to my future. I wish that this type of health camp was conducted every year.

Abul Hasem (27) injured in 2017

”

€60 / \$64

Allows for 1 month vocational training
6 months training: €360

Supports a family of an injured worker
during the duration of the vocational training

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by PayPal or by **Bank Transfer**

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TREATMENT FOR ASBESTOS VICTIMS

The shipbreaking workers are vulnerable to several occupational diseases due to the exposure to toxic substances embedded within the ships' structures, including asbestos. Asbestos is one of the most common and most hazardous materials found onboard ships. When extracted, asbestos breaks into fine fibres, which can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time, putting anyone nearby in danger of inhaling it. If inhaled, the fibres can lead to fatal diseases such as lung cancer, mesothelioma and asbestosis. Asbestos fibres can furthermore travel to the workers' accommodation through clothes, lengthening exposure to the pollutant and exposing others living with them. Surrounding communities can also be exposed to asbestos that is hastily dumped or even re-used, such as in Chittagong where asbestos plates are cut to make small ovens.

Early studies showed that shipbreaking workers exposed to asbestos have an elevated increased mortality due to lung cancer and other cancers compared to the general population. Handling asbestos requires special training, specific protective equipment, and the use of decontamination equipment, which is not the case in the shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh.

€20/ \$21

Provides one worker suffering from asbestosis with daily treatment for one month, including medication and pulmonary rehabilitation, to relieve mild to moderate symptoms.

€50 / \$53

Guarantees emergency help to one worker with severe symptoms of asbestosis.

DONATE NOW

by [PayPal](#) or by **Bank Transfer**

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11

“

This fundraising campaign aims at supporting those who directly suffer from the hazardous practices of the Bangladeshi shipbreaking industry. Donations will provide affected workers with essential resources to improve their livelihoods, ensuring a healthier future also for the local communities.

NGO Shipbreaking Platform

”

HELP CHANGE THE LIVES OF AFFECTED SHIPBREAKING WORKERS FOR THE BETTER:

- Support injured workers in their rehabilitation process.
- Support injured shipbreaking workers attend training programs for alternative and sustainable livelihoods.
- Support the medical treatment of shipbreaking workers suffering from asbestos exposure.

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

HELP PROVIDING TREATMENT TO
INJURED WORKERS AND ASBESTOS VICTIMS
IN BANGLADESH



DONATE NOW

12

RESEARCH & READINGS

February 2024

Md. Nazrul Islam, Sumon Ganguli, Narottam Saha, M. Mamun Huda, Md. Ashraful Hoque, Cheng Peng, Jack C. Ng

This study explored the impact of shipbreaking activities in Bangladesh in agricultural soil and key food crops (rice and vegetables) surrounding the open beaching shipbreaking yards in Bangladesh. Samples were collected between 2019-2020. The potential accumulation of metal in agricultural soil poses a significant threat to public health through food chain contamination. The results indicated that during both dry and wet seasons, the concentrations of Cd, As, Pb, V, Cr, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Se, Sn, Sb, and Tl in the agricultural soil were significantly higher than in the control site.

Uncovering the impact of mega-scale shipbreaking yards on soil and crop quality in Bangladesh: A spatiotemporal dynamics and associated health risks of metal/loid contamination

March 2024

The DW media documentary reports the ecological disaster that the shipbreaking industry has caused to the ecosystems and the communities in Chattogram, Bangladesh. By featuring testimonies from various stakeholders, including fishermen, environmental activists, and a marine biodiversity researcher, the short documentary highlights the multifaceted impact of shipbreaking on the region. The loss of 25 species of fish over the past decades, mentioned by the academic researcher, underscores the devastating consequences of shipbreaking on local marine ecosystems. This loss not only threatens the biodiversity of the region but also jeopardises the livelihoods of fishermen who depend on these fish species for their sustenance. Additionally, the documentary sheds light on the dire working and living conditions faced by seasonal shipbreaking workers, as recounted through their testimonies. These workers endure long hours, inadequate safety measures, and exposure to hazardous materials, resulting in chronic health problems and physical ailments. Their voices serve as a significant reminder of the human cost of the shipbreaking industry.

DW - Scrapping ships in Bangladesh

OUR REPORTS

NGO Shipbreaking Platform

“Trading Lives for Profit: How the Shipping Industry Circumvents Regulations to Scrap Toxic Ships on Bangladesh’s Beaches” - In collaboration with Human Rights Watch (2023)

Breaking Out: Anchoring Circular Innovation for ship recycling. (2022)

The Toxic Tide - Data and figures (2022)

Contradiction in terms: European Union must align its waste ship exports with international law and green deal (2020)

Study Report on Child Labour in the Shipbreaking Sector in Bangladesh (2019)

Behind the Hypocrisy of Better Beaches (2019)

Recycling Outlook. Decommissioning of North Sea Floating Oil & Gas Units. (2019)



To ensure that safe and clean ship recycling becomes the norm, and not the exception, the Platform will continue to inform policy makers, financial and corporate leaders, as well as researchers and journalists. With a broad base of support both in orientation and geographically, including membership in ship owning as well as shipbreaking countries, the Platform plays an important role in promoting solutions that encompass the respect of human rights, corporate responsibility and environmental justice.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

**IF YOU SHARE OUR VISION PLEASE MAKE A DONATION
TO SUPPORT OUR WORK OR CONTACT US TO FIND OUT
HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER!**

**SUPPORT
OUR WORK**



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WE THANK THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE LIFE PROGRAMME FOR THEIR SUPPORT.