At least 1,000 ships could be scrapped this year – more than three times the global average – GMS president Anil Sharma told a London ship recycling conference today.

The disclosure followed the strongest-ever five-year period in ship recycling, when prices rose from $150 to $300 per tonne. There followed six weeks of "near panic" when the market collapsed, Sharma said.

Since the collapse, Sharma said his company was being offered 30-40 ships a day for scrapping.

Most of these were Handymaxes, containers, LPG carriers, ro-ros and a few tankers.

The problem now is a lack of capacity, with safety and manpower shortages and low profit margins for recyclers.

"The next two years will be the busiest the recycling market has ever seen," said Sharma.