Letters

To the Editor

Recently we have come across leading shipping publications using the term "shipbreaking" over "shiprecycling".

There are various reasons upon which the term "shiprecycling" is more apt to this industry and has now been universally accepted.

It is not just the steel that is recovered. For example, ropes and chains are generally re-exported for reuse in the maritime industry or reused by the shiprecyclers themselves at their yards, generators can find their way into the agricultural sectors, where there is a shortage of regular power supply or generation, while furniture, beds, bunks and cabin materials are sold to the likes of emergency camps, hotels, motels and hostels, the Red Cross and YMCA etc.

In short, the recycling markets have developed a "reuse" market for every nut, bolt and kitchen sink found on board a vessel. In our opinion, no other industry is so well placed as the shiprecycling industry. The industry is entirely "self dependent".

Alang in an average year recycles about 400 ships with annual sales turnover of about $750m. Certainly, "breaking" would not generate this revenue stream.

Government and international organisations have wisely adapted the term "shiprecycling". The recently drafted International Convention on the Environmentally Safe and Sound Recycling of Ships (May 2009) stands in support. Further, all government references and notifications make reference to "shiprecycling" including the Supreme Court of India vide its recent landmark judgment in 2007. Clearly, this speaks for itself.

The shiprecycling association in India, which is the gathering of shiprecyclers, is called the "Ship Recyclers Association of India". This is a registered body with the Gujarat Maritime Board, Government of Gujarat.

The gap between "perception and reality" is perhaps the widest in this industry than in any other in the modern world and we need to bridge it.

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