

1. Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019

Prelims Level: International Policies & Schemes

Mains Level: GS-II Important International Institutions, Agencies and fora- their Structure, Mandate.

Why in News?

- Cabinet approves proposal for enactment of Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and accession to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

About Hong Kong International Convention:

- The Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 (the Hong Kong Convention), was adopted at a diplomatic conference held in Hong Kong, China in 2009.
- It was adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2009.
- The Convention is aimed at ensuring that ships, when being recycled after reaching the end of their operational lives; do not pose any unnecessary risks to human health, safety and to the environment.
- It also addresses concerns raised about the working and environmental conditions at many of the world's ship recycling locations.
- The Convention is yet to come into force because it has not been ratified by 15 nations, representing 40 per cent of the world merchant shipping by gross tonnage (capacity) and a maximum annual ship recycling volume of not less than 3 per cent of the combined tonnage of the countries.

Why is it Needed?

- India is the leader in the global ship recycling industry, with a share of over 30% of the market. As per UNCTAD report on Review of Maritime Transport, 2018, India had demolished 6323 tonnes in 2017, of known ship scrapping across the world.
- The ship-recycling industry is a labour-intensive sector, but it is susceptible to concerns on environmental safety.

Salient Features of the Bill:

- The Government of India has decided to enact a Bill, namely Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019, to provide for the regulation of recycling of ships by setting certain international standards and laying down the statutory mechanism for enforcement of such standards.

- It has also been decided to accede to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.
- When the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 comes into force, its provisions will be implemented under the provisions of the Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and rules and regulations framed there under.

Benefits of the Bill:

- The proposed Bill restricts and prohibits the use or installation of hazardous material, which applies irrespective of whether a ship is meant for recycling or not.
- For new ships, such restriction or prohibition on use of hazardous material will be immediate, that is, from the date the legislation comes into force, while existing ships shall have a period of five years for compliance.
- Restriction or prohibition on use of hazardous material would not be applied to warships and non-commercial ships operated by Government.
- Ships shall be surveyed and certified on the inventory of hazardous material used in ships.
- Under the Bill, ship recycling facilities are required to be authorized and ships shall be recycled only in such authorized ship recycling facilities.
- The Bill also provides that ships shall be recycled in accordance with a ship-specific recycling plan.
- Ships to be recycled in India shall be required to obtain a Ready for Recycling Certificate in accordance with the HKC.