

Publication: The Times Of India Mumbai;Date: Apr 4, 2012;Section: Times Nation;Page: 19

Deadly oil tanker sails for Alang burial

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Exxon Valdez, the crude oil tanker that caused one of the worst-ever oil spills in Alaska in 1989, is set for ship breakers' torches.

The 213,000-tonne tanker, which was repaired and converted into an ore-carrying vessel after the accident, is said to be headed for Alang, the biggest ship recycling yard in Asia, located in the Gulf of Cambay. Even as environmentalists worldwide have condemned it as a "toxic" ship, sources in Alang, who are in know of the vessel, said there are slim chances of the oil tanker carrying any hazardous material.

Alang, always on the radar of environmentalists, faces no imminent threat from the vessel, top officers in the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) told TOI. "It is just an ore transporting vessel after conversion. So we don't think there can be any hazardous material on the ship," said a senior GPCB officer in Alang.

Exxon Valdez, which has changed hands several times, has been renamed Oriental Nicety and was purchased by Alang-based Blue Oasis, a subsidiary of Priya Blue Industries led by Sanjay Mehta.

The GPCB inspects any ship that comes for scrapping at Alang. Before it beaches, GPCB officials go aboard and check for toxic material.

Gujarat Maritime Board, the maritime regulator, which gives permission for ships to beach at Alang, said they had no information as yet on when the vessel would arrive. But there are reports that the vessel is on its way to Alang and it's currently somewhere near Singapore. It takes about a week's time for a vessel to reach Alang from Singapore.

On March 24, 1989, Exxon Valdez rammed a reef in the Prince William Sound near Alaska, spilling nearly 36,000 tonnes of oil into the Pacific Ocean. It took roughly three years and nearly \$4 billion for the clean-up.



In 1989, Exxon Valdez had rammed a reef in the Prince William Sound near Alaska, spilling nearly 36,000 tonnes of oil into the Pacific Ocean