

Countries vote to delay implementation of carbon-free shipping plan

Member countries of the International Maritime Organization postpone the plan amid threats from U.S. President Donald Trump. The strategic plan was aimed at moving the shipping industry away from the use of fossil fuel.

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JACOB KOSHY



The 2023 IMO GHG (greenhouse gas) Strategy — the umbrella framework — envisages, in particular, a minimum 40% reduction in carbon intensity of international shipping (to reduce CO2 emissions per transport work) by 2030. File | Photo Credit: Getty Images

Pressured by the United States, member countries of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), including India, postponed a vote on a strategic plan to move the shipping industry away from the use of fossil fuel and become 'net-zero' by 2050.

In April, a sub-committee of the IMO had approved a framework to bring in new fuel standard for ships and a global pricing mechanism for carbon emissions. It was decided then that countries would formally vote in a meeting in October to bring these measures into force beginning 2027.

At that time, 63 countries voted 'yes' (including the EU27, Brazil, China, India, Canada, U.K., Korea and Japan) and 16 countries, including the United States, against it.

U.S. threats

While countries such as Saudi Arabia and Russia have been opposed to the framework, the United States administration since then continues to issue explicit threats against countries that had supported the framework.

Ahead of the vote on October 17, in London, U.S. President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social, "I am outraged that the International Maritime Organization is voting in London this week to pass a global Carbon Tax. The United States will NOT stand for this Global Green New Scam Tax on Shipping, and will not adhere to it in any way, shape, or form. We will not tolerate increased prices on American Consumers OR, the creation of a Green New Scam Bureaucracy to spend YOUR money on their Green dreams. Stand with the United States, and vote NO in London tomorrow!"

When proceedings began on October 14, deliberations reportedly became fractious. Ultimately, Singapore brought in a proposal to delay a decision on the matter for a year and Saudi Arabia proposed a vote. This resulted in 57 countries voting in favour of delay; 49 countries against it and 21 abstentions. *The Hindu* could not confirm which way India voted.

"We regret that IMO members followed Singapore's initial proposal to delay the adoption of the framework by 12 months, which Saudi Arabia called to a vote. This is unacceptable given the urgency we face in light of accelerating climate change," Ralph Regenvanu, Minister for Climate Change, Republic of Vanuatu, who was present at the meeting, said in a statement.

"The IMO's failure to adopt the framework this week marks a failure of this United Nations agency to act decisively on climate change. This makes the road to Bélem and beyond more difficult. But we know that we have international law on our side and will continue to fight for our people and the planet," he added.

Shipping emissions

The 2023 IMO GHG (greenhouse gas) Strategy — the umbrella framework — envisages, in particular, a minimum 40% reduction in carbon intensity of international shipping (to reduce CO₂ emissions per transport work) by 2030. The Strategy also envisions large-scale adoption of zero or 'near-zero' GHG emission technologies, fuels and/or energy sources which are to represent at least 5%, striving for 10%, of the energy used by international shipping by 2030.

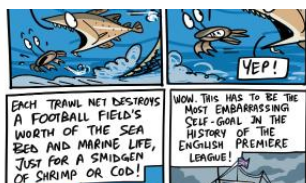
The measures will cover large ocean-going ships that exceed 5,000 gross tonnes, which are responsible for about 85% of industry emissions. Shipping's share of global anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions remained stable at approximately 1.7% (or 2.3% of global anthropogenic CO₂), during 2016-2023.

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In Case You Missed It



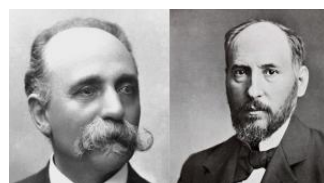
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