



OIL & NATURAL GAS CORPORATION (WOU) KARMACHARI SANGHATANA

AFFILIATED TO - PETROLEUM & GAS WORKERS' FEDERATION OF INDIA

Reg. No. (By - II - 8268)

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Website : www.ksmumbai.com

REF. : ONGC/KS/ 21 /20 26

DATE : 20/02/2026

To,
The President – Western Offshore
ONGC-WOU,
Vasudhara Bhavan,
Bandra (East),
Mumbai – 400 051.

dc

Sub.: Urgent Action Required on Unsafe Helicopter Crew-Change Operations of Rig Sagar Ratna from Surat.

Respected Sir,

We are in receipt of a serious complaint letter from the crew members of ONGC Rig Sagar Ratna to express grave concern over the recent helicopter transport failures compromising the safety & operations of our offshore installations. The Union fully acknowledges ONGC's commitment to safety; indeed, ONGC's own Offshore Travel SOP emphasizes minimizing **"The Inherent Risk Associated with Offshore Travel"**. Unfortunately, recent events have revealed a critical lapse in this commitment.

For several months, only one helicopter has been assigned to service Sagar Ratna & surrounding assets for crew changes & emergency evacuation. This aircraft has exhibited a "Rickety & Shaky Demeanor," as reported by crews aboard. On **11 Nov. 2025**, this chopper suffered a bird strike (Flight VT-RAJ), necessitating inspections. More alarmingly, two consecutive aborted sorties occurred last week: on 14 Feb. 2026 (to Rig **Divine Driller**) & on 17 Feb. 2026 (to Rig **GD Chauru**), both returning to base shortly after take-off due to technical glitches. These incidents caused all crew-change flights on 14–17 Feb to be cancelled, leaving personnel stranded offshore.

The core issue is clear: with **no backup helicopter available**, ONGC has created an unacceptable risk for its offshore teams. Helicopter transport is the sole means of crew rotation & medical evacuation for our rigs. The absence of redundancy means that any technical failure leaves crews without safe passage a scenario wholly at odds with the duty to provide "Safe Transportation Facilities" under Indian labour safety norms & ONGC's own aviation standards. Crew members are understandably anxious. To date, **no official update** on the helicopter's airworthiness or repair timeline has been shared with those affected, exacerbating uncertainty.

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In the interest of preserving safety & trust, we **earnestly request** the following immediate actions:

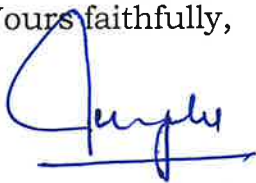
- **Deploy an Additional Helicopter:** Charter or allocate a second helicopter to cover all routine crew changes & to remain on standby for any emergency (e.g., medical evacuation). This redundant arrangement is standard safety practice for offshore operations & long overdue in this case.
- **Communicate Technical Status:** Provide a transparent report on the recent technical issues (14 Feb & 17 Feb glitches) & certify the repaired aircraft's fitness before it returns to service. Clear communication of the root cause & corrective measures will allay crew concerns.
- **Establish a Formal Contingency Plan:** Draft & circulate an emergency response plan detailing alternative evacuation route (such as standby aircraft or nearby helipads) should the primary helicopter be grounded. This plan must be explained to all offshore staff.
- **Review Helicopter Service Agreements:** Review the charter contract with the helicopter operator to include clauses mandating standby aircraft availability & strict maintenance schedules. Service reliability guarantees are essential for safe offshore operations.

We trust ONGC Management shares our view that no expense or effort is too great where human life & safety are concerned. We propose a meeting between union representatives & ONGC aviation/logistics management within the next week to finalize timelines for the above actions.

Consequences if Unresolved: If these safety issues are not addressed promptly, the Union will be forced to consider additional steps, including escalation to statutory safety & labor authorities & mobilizing further union action. We hope it does not come to that the ONGC will act swiftly to prevent any incident or operational stoppage.

We appreciate your immediate attention to this critical matter & await your positive response. Please feel free to communicate with us at the contact above for any clarifications or to schedule the proposed meeting.

Thanking you,
Yours faithfully,



(Pradeep Mayekar)
General Secretary

Copy to:

1. ED Chief – HR Services, ONGC-WOU, NBP Green Heights, BKC, Bandra (E), Mum. 51
2. ED - COL, ONGC-WOU, 11 High, Bandra Sion Link Road, Sion, Mumbai - 17
3. GGM (P) - Head Offshore Safety, ONGC-WOU, 11 High, Bandra Sion Link Rd, Mum. 17
4. GGM (E) - Head Air Logistic, ONGC-WOU, Juhu Helibase, Santacruz (W), Mumbai-56
5. GM, I/c - IR, ONGC-WOU, NBP Green Heights, BKC, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 51

ONGC Rig Sagar Ratna

Jacked-Up Location off Surat

Date: 18.02.2026

To:

Rig Manager,
Mumbai Region-Drilling Services.
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited.

Subject: Grievance Regarding Crew Change Chopper Sorties Operated from Surat Airport

Respected Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the crew members of **ONGC Rig Sagar Ratna**, currently jacked up near Surat, we respectfully submit this representation to bring to your kind attention serious concerns regarding the crew change helicopter sorties being operated from Surat Airport.

At present, only one helicopter has been deployed for carrying out all crew change sorties for our installation and nearby offshore assets. The deployed machine has a rickety and shaky demeanour while flying. The chopper has been facing frequent challenges for the past months wherein chopper sorties have been either delayed or cancelled due to technical glitches and a bird hit (on 11.11.2025, in Sagar Ratna sortie VT-RR1 returning from Rig). In recent days, multiple incidents have occurred which have raised significant safety concerns among offshore personnel:

1. **14.02.2026-Saturday:** The helicopter departed from Surat Airport for crew change to Rig Divine Driller; however, within approximately 10 minutes of take-off, it was compelled to return to base due to a reported technical glitch, and the landing at the intended offshore location did not take place. No further sorties were performed on the day.
2. **17.02.2026-Tuesday:** The helicopter departed from Surat Airport for crew change to Rig GD Chaaru; however, within few minutes of take-off, it was compelled to return to base due to a reported technical glitch, and the sortie to the intended offshore location did not take place. No further sorties were performed on the day. No further sorties have been performed since.

As of now, crew changes scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday have been postponed pending rectification of the helicopter. While we fully acknowledge that grounding an aircraft in case of technical discrepancies is a necessary safety measure, the absence of a standby helicopter has created operational and emergency preparedness concerns.

Currently, there is no alternate helicopter available—neither for routine crew changes nor for any contingency such as medical evacuation. The repeated technical interruptions, including the aborted sortie on Sunday shortly after take-off, have understandably heightened apprehension among crew members. The prospect of a recurrence of a technical malfunction mid-air is a matter of serious concern for offshore personnel who rely entirely on helicopter transport.

Further, no formal communication or technical assurance regarding the airworthiness, rectification measures undertaken, or fitness for return to service has been conveyed to the offshore crew. This lack of clarity has contributed to uncertainty and anxiety among employees.

Given that helicopter services constitute the sole means of crew transfer and emergency evacuation for offshore installations, the absence of redundancy significantly increases operational vulnerability. Due to unavailable secondary backup chopper, the sorties are forced to be operated by the same malfunctioning chopper that has been undergoing frequent repairs and failures due to technical glitches. It creates a furthermore vulnerable situation in the context of emergency or medical evacuation of crew members, as currently all such evacuations are presently done from Mumbai, leading to extended flight time during medical emergency.

In view of the above, we respectfully propose the following measures for urgent consideration:

1. **Immediate Deployment of a Standby Helicopter:** To ensure continuity of crew changes and availability for medical or emergency evacuation at all times.
2. **Transparent Technical Communication:** Issuance of an official update outlining the nature of recent technical issues, rectification actions undertaken, and certification of airworthiness prior to resumption of operations.
3. **Formal Contingency Plan:** Establishment and communication of a clear emergency response and evacuation plan in the event of helicopter unavailability during emergencies.
4. **Contractual Safeguards:** Review of helicopter service contracts to mandate standby aircraft availability and service reliability clauses for offshore operations.

This representation is made in the interest of aviation safety, operational reliability, and crew welfare. The crew of Sagar Ratna remains fully committed to maintaining safe and efficient operations; however, we earnestly request management's immediate intervention to resolve current unsafe helicopter transportation practices and restore confidence in the safety and reliability of offshore aviation support.

We trust that this matter will receive urgent attention and that suitable corrective measures as proposed and as adjudicated right, will be implemented at the earliest.

Thanking you.

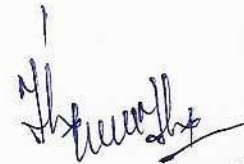
Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of
Crew of ONGC Rig Sagar Ratna

Through proper channel copy to:

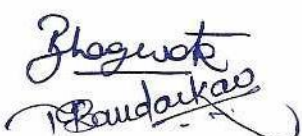
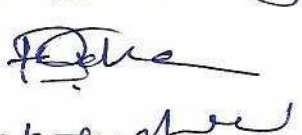
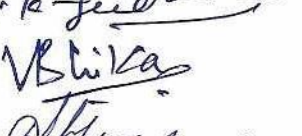


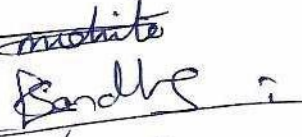
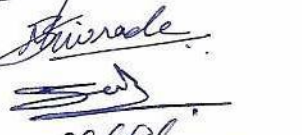
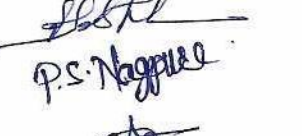
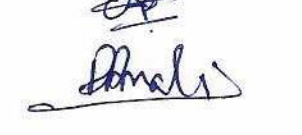

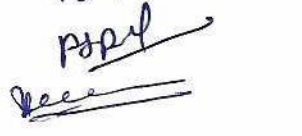
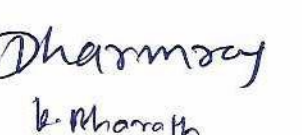
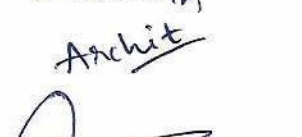


- i. CCDS-Mumbai Region
- ii. ED-COL, 11 High, Mumbai
- iii. Head-HR-ER, Mumbai
- iv. President-ASTO Mumbai
- v. General Secretary-OOA Mumbai
- vi. General Secretary-PEU Mumbai
- vii. General Secretary-KS Mumbai

Received on 18/02/2026



Nasir Ul Din
GE (Drilling)
OIM-Sagar Ratna
ONGC, Mumbai

RIG SAGAR RATNA CREW

SR. NO.	NAME	SIGN
1)	VINOD RAJENDRA BHAGWAT	
2)	Mangesh Dattaram Baudarkar	
3)	DARSHAN LONDHE	
4)	VIKRAM K. JADHAV.	
5)	VISHAL S. BHAIKA	
5)	Nitin A. Choudhary	
7.	Dipak Sagar	
8.	Abhijit V. Shinde	
9.	S.P. Gharat	
10.	R.V. MOHITE	
11.	Gajendra Londhe	
12.	Anurag B. Kusrade	
13.	Shaikh Abdulsaeed. A.	
14.	Abzar Ahmed	
15.	Poakash Nagpure.	
16.	ABHISIT P. DAHIBHAT.	
17.	D.R. mali	
18.	Digambar Baud	
19.	Arshed Khan	
20.	Rupesh J. Rawl	
21.	Hareeshbhai N Reethwaq	
22.	Dharm Ray Meena	
23.	K. Bharath chandra	
24.	Archit Mishra	
25.	Deepak Yadav	
26.	Aniruddhasinh Gohil	

Rig Sagar Ratna Crew.

SR NO

Name

27.

Miraj K. Gautam

Singh,

28.

Karthik Sisupal

~~Singh~~

29.

Himanshu Nandee

~~Ranjan~~

30

Ramendra Kumar

~~Nandee~~

31

KRISHNA KUMAR SINGH

~~Ranjan~~

32.

Amol Chauhan

K. Singh

33.

RAJAT SHARMA

~~Amol~~

34.

CHHOTTE LAL LIPTA

~~Ranjan~~

5.

Ashish Gupta.

Chhotte

~~Amol~~