

PETROLEUM EMPLOYEES UNION

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SINCE : 1954

Date: 05.11.2025

To,
Shri. Hardeep Singh Puri,
Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India.

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To,
Shri. Sunil Dattatray Tatkare,
Chairperson,
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Subject: Appeal for Intervention in the Disturbing Situation Faced by ONGC Employees after New Leadership Appointments.

Respected Sir,

Our Organization has been consistently working for the energy security of the nation since its foundation in 1956. In 1974, India's first offshore well was drilled in our very own Mumbai High asset (formerly known as the Bombay High asset). Our drilling rigs work consistently to explore new reservoirs and enhance production through various workover jobs in existing wells. The Mumbai offshore is considered the crown jewel of India's energy journey.

Working in an offshore environment involves many challenges, such as rough weather, constant exposure to hazardous chemicals & gases, and working with limited resources and manpower. Manpower stays away from their families for 14 continuous days to work in this hazardous environment, where safe evacuation is difficult in case of an emergency.

Processing plants at Uran and Hazira also play an important role in processing crude oil and gas, which are then dispatched further via the Trombay terminal. Working in oil and gas drilling, production, and processing plants is considered one of the most difficult and risky work environments.

In this 50+ year's journey, our organization has faced numerous challenges, which have been overcome through the teamwork of the workforce and management. Many of our brave colleagues have lost their lives in various accidents, such as the BHN fire and other incidents. Frequent gas leakages and fires are part of our work, but they are carefully managed by our brave workforce, who are stationed at their designated workplaces to safeguard the assets and ensure uninterrupted production.

We would like to bring to your esteemed attention the serious concerns regarding the conditions faced by employees working in hazardous environments that are crucial to the energy security of our country. Over the past three years, we have observed that the current management, under the leadership of the CEO, has consistently ignored

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the safety, health, and basic welfare of employees. We wish to highlight the following issues for your consideration:

1. Neglect of Safety Protocols:

Working in the oil and gas industry is inherently hazardous. On one side management use safety reasons for forceful implementation of 21 days duty pattern. But we sadly like to mention that under the current leadership, safety protocols have been consistently overlooked. For instance, since 2023, cotton coveralls have not been provided to employees. We have to call agitation program for providing PPE & other safety items. It was assured to us that, as a temporary measure, coverall will be provided by 15 Sept 2025, but till date coveralls have not provided. Safety shoes are not available since last 6 months. It is very shameful that for the safety and PPE items, we have to sit on protest like hunger fast. The "buddy system," a crucial safety measure for offshore work, is often ignored due to a shortage of manpower, forcing employees to undertake risky tasks without the necessary safeguards in place.

2. Violation of Legal Provisions:

The management has made several decisions that are not aligned with the provisions outlined in the Mines Act, the Factories Act, Industrial Act and other government Gazettes, government notifications issued from time to time. These Acts lay down clear procedures for implementing changes in the workplace, which the current management has failed to follow. This violation not only jeopardizes the morale, health, and safety of employees, but it has also created an environment of fear and uncertainty within the organization. The attitude and behaviour of the current leadership resemble that of a monarch who disregards the laws and democratic provisions of our country.

3. Reduction in Food Supply Standards:

For any company in today's era, way of enhancing profit is to adapt advance technology and rise production. Our organisation's current management is not making efforts to reduce losses in production. For example, PWC system which is used to recover oil completely from water is non-functional at most of the locations. Instead of addressing such issues management is focusing on reducing food box supply. Management is also planning to change the frequency of food box deliveries from a weekly to a monthly basis. Offshore storage facilities are designed to accommodate weekly food supplies, and this proposed change would not only compromise food safety but also deprive employees of nutritious meals, which are essential for their well-being.

4. Deplorable Living Conditions Offshore:

The living conditions at most offshore locations are substandard. Regular maintenance and refurbishing are required for several of the living quarters, while some need complete replacement. Due to pressure of meeting various deadlines & improper planning POB (Person On Board) are constantly higher than the designed capacity. Improper living conditions, poorly functioning HVAC systems etc resulted into unnecessary stress and frustration for on-board persons. Due to such frustration one suicide case had happened in past. Despite this, management has continually neglected these basic human needs under the current leadership.

5. We have learned that management is planning to discontinue the supply of bottled water to offshore installations as a cost-cutting measure. Bottled drinking water is

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provided to offshore installations since more than 20 years. Now, Employees will be forced to drink water from local water maker units, which convert seawater into potable water. This water is highly unsafe from drinking purpose due to various issues such as non-working, poorly functioning STP (Sewage Treatment Plant), Oil and chemical contamination near suction of water maker, old and rusted water tanks, pipelines etc. This decision reflects a shocking disregard for the fundamental need for clean drinking water.

6. Stoppage of Recruitment and Employment Generation:

One of the primary purposes for the establishment of public sector undertakings (PSUs) was to generate employment opportunities. We are aware that the government is actively promoting initiatives to create jobs. However, under the current leadership, the management has completely halted the recruitment process, thereby depriving many of the opportunity to secure employment in this vital sector. Management is pushing for O&M contracts, in O&M contracts inexperienced manpower is deputed for the risky task which resulted in many incidents offshore and plants. The recent fire incidents at the ONGC Uran Plant and Hazira Plant starkly highlight pressing issues such as manpower shortages, inadequate supervision of contractual jobs by ONGC representatives, and mismanagement by the concerned plant authorities. Despite prior notifications and alerts through our letters, these concerns remain unaddressed, underscoring the need for urgent corrective action to prevent future occurrences.

7. In the name of cost-cutting, management has unilaterally discontinued long-standing practices that were in place for decades. For example, working on National Holidays is typically compensated with overtime pay, a practice followed even by smaller private enterprises. However, the current management has stopped paying overtime allowances for employees working on these national holidays/ closed holidays and compensatory off for extra duty.

8. We came to know that "Next Gen Rigs" which are purchased for onshore drilling are purchased at very high cost has not provided any significant benefit. Cost of these rigs is many times high as compared to normal rigs. These rigs are supposed to be work under auto mode but because of the various issues they are still running on the manual mode. Some of these rigs are already deployed and many will be deputed in near future. Management is doing nothing for rectifying the issues related to "Next Gen Rig". It seems to be waste of money if these rigs are operated in manual mode.

9. Disparity in Management Privileges:

While the management claims to be enforcing cost-cutting measures, it has awarded itself luxury cars, including BMWs and Audis, through an "Own Your Car" scheme. This stands in stark contrast to the substandard quality of materials provided to offshore locations/plants under the GeM policy but cars from foreign luxury brands are availed for themselves. It is disheartening to see such indulgence for management while basic needs for employees are being neglected.

10. Various decision of the management under current leadership has impacted on the most important part of our organization, i.e., the workforce. Unlike any refinery, bank, or administrative establishment, our workforce have to perform duties in very remote and difficult areas. Our employees, who work in very stressful environments, away from their families for continuous 14 days where only water is visible, with no

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social media access, very limited communication facilities, and almost no recreation facilities available, are now highly frustrated with very low morale because of wrong policies forcefully implemented by this individual. In the name of the future vision for the next 25 years, his decisions have badly affected the present and near future of our organization. Our installations/plants, which are more than 30 years old, needs a sufficient number of highly motivated, experienced manpower. Due to the stoppage of recruitment and wrong implementation of transfer policy, our plants are facing a shortage of manpower, which cannot be fulfilled by contractual persons who change frequently. JRTP, which was implemented without considering any ground reality, has resulted in a lack of experienced manpower at installations/plants. While cost-cutting has severely affected the core areas, very high costs have been incurred on transfers. Most of these transfers were not useful for the growth or smooth functioning of the organization. Job rotation and transfer policy were implemented without considering field conditions and the experience required. In the oil field, especially when installations and plants are very old, experienced manpower is required for the safe and smooth functioning of operations. After the implementation of this JRTP (Job Rotation and Transfer Policy), the condition of operations at our installations/plants has become worse. Our installations/plants are very old, and employees responsible for operations are new and inexperienced. This may prove fatal to manpower and assets in case of emergency situations.

11. Due to pressure of cost cutting and achieving production targets maintenance, replacement of core systems is ignored. For example, produced water conditioning system (PWC), which is used to recover oil from the produced water (after separation of oil from water in separator), is non-functional/partially functional at most of the installations. This results in loss of oil which will drained to sea without completely recovered. It has been observed that due to lack of planning many time costly materials which is purchased and get rusted before installation such as shutdown valve.

Short sighted Cost-cutting has affected some core functions of our organization, which will lead to major losses in the long run, such as:

1. Short sighted Cost-cutting in logistics has resulted in irregular supply of necessary chemicals, which will affect our reservoirs and pipelines in the long run.
2. Most of the pipelines carrying produced crude oil and gas are heavily corroded and require maintenance. This focus on cost-cutting and prioritizing production targets has led to the neglect of pipeline maintenance, frequently resulting in leakages and loss of valuable production.
3. ONGC had a guest house facility which was established in 1989's for the accommodation of transit passengers. These transit passengers are employees posted offshore, who travel from all over India to perform their duties. They need to stay in Mumbai for a day while joining or leaving duty. ONGC had a guest house in Santacruz, Mumbai, which was near the airport and the helibase (from where employees join duty). For the past five years, this guest house has been undergoing renovation, and a large amount has been spent on hotel accommodations. We have requested several times for the expedited completion of the guest house, but no steps have been taken yet.

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4. Most of our offshore installations are old and require regular maintenance. Short sighted Cost-cutting has resulted in the stoppage of this maintenance, which may lead to a complete breakdown of these systems in the future, resulting in significantly higher costs.
5. Recruitment has been completely stopped. Due to continuous retirements, the manpower in our installations and plants has been significantly reduced. This has resulted in an unsafe working environment, which could prove fatal in the event of an emergency.

We trust that you will consider these concerns seriously, as they directly affect the safety, health, and well-being of employees who are working diligently to ensure the energy security of our nation. We humbly request your intervention to address these issues and restore a fair and safe working environment for all employees.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely



(Santosh J. Patil)
General Secretary

Copy to :

1. The Secretary (L&E), Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India, New Delhi-110001
2. The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, New Delhi-110001
3. President, INTUC, New Delhi
4. General Secretary, NFPW, Mumbai.
5. CEO, ONGC, N.Delhi.
6. Director (Prodn.) , ONGC, N.Delhi.
7. Director (HR) ONGC, N.Delhi.
8. Director (T&FS) ONGC, N.Delhi.