

PETROLEUM EMPLOYEES UNION

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SINCE : 1954

Date: 25.07.2026

To,
ED - Chief Corporate Drilling Services,
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC),
11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi Link Road, Mumbai.

RPT.

ED – Chief Corporate Logistics,
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC),
11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi Link Road, Mumbai.

**Subject: Uncompromising Demand for Immediate Intervention in Catastrophic Crew Change
Helicopter Operations at Surat Helibase – Rig Sagar Jyoti.**

Respected Sir,

We write this letter on behalf of the entire offshore workforce of Rig Sagar Jyoti and the Petroleum Employees' Union (P.E.U., ONGC W.O.U.). We are forced to bring to your immediate attention a severe, systemic crisis that threatens the lives, safety, and mental well-being of our workers. Despite repeated written communications over the last several weeks by the Crew & the Union — specifically emails dated 24.06.2026, 14.07.2026, 15.07.2026, 18.07.2026, and 24.07.2026— management has maintained a deeply concerning, absolute silence.

No accountability has been fixed, and no substantive response has been provided while our brothers endure gruelling conditions offshore. Let it be known clearly: Safety cannot be compromised for operational expediency. In alignment with ONGC's own stated commitment to a "Target Zero" incident culture, we demand immediate action on the following critical matters:

1. The Chronic Failure of Surat Helicopter Operations & Safety Concerns :

The crew change sorties operating out of Surat Airport have become an active hazard. The helicopter VT-RR1 (Bell 412, managed by GVHL) experienced a terrifying pattern of 3 to 4 technical snags within a 30-day period, including a critical emergency landing on 26.03.2026 where airport emergency response teams had to be fully mobilized.

Because the workforce collectively exercised their right to safety and refused to board the unairworthy VT-RR1 (formally communicated by the Union on 18.07.2026), management deployed a replacement chopper, VT-RRF, on 21.07.2026. Shockingly, within just three days, VT-RRF also developed technical snags and grounded operations.

Y

TEL - RASAYAN BHAVAN, Tilak Road, Dadar (E.), Mumbai - 400 014.

Compounding this failure, when VT-RR1 was shifted back to the Juhu Helibase in Mumbai, it began operating daily on production duties without a single reported issue. This creates a negative perception that the issue lies squarely with the substandard maintenance practices, lack of engineering support, and faulty troubleshooting at the Surat Helibase or something not known.

2. Severe Human Exhaustion & Crew Change Stagnation :

As of today, 25.07.2026, crew change operations have ground to a complete standstill, leaving an incoming backlog of 25 personnel and an outgoing backlog of 25 personnel stranded.

- ☐ Regular ONGC employees have been trapped offshore, completing up to **26 or more consecutive working days**.
- ☐ Contractual workers have been left abandoned on board for **42 consecutive days**.

Forcing personnel to perform intensive 12-hour operational shifts under these extended timelines of 21 days offshore duty pattern has caused severe physical fatigue, mental exhaustion, and decimated morale. Management is actively increasing the probability of catastrophic human error and compromising the safety of the entire rig & its Crew.

3. Exploitative Payload Restrictions and Inadequate Facilities :

Since the beginning of July, an unexplained payload restriction was slapped on Rig Sagar Jyoti, reducing passenger capacity from the standard 8–9 personnel down to just 5–6 per sortie. While the Global Coordinator hiddenly cited "One Engine Inoperative (OEI) escape requirements," the exact same helicopter is flying full payloads to the nearby Rig GD Chaaru under identical weather conditions. Why is this penalty applied only to Sagar Jyoti without any prior consultation with Rig Management?

Furthermore, the workers stranded at the Surat Guest House are facing deplorable conditions with a complete lack of adequate facilities. Workers are being forced to pay out-of-pocket for food and basic necessities. To make matters worse, because the Webice system is exclusively configured for Mumbai-based operations, these crew members cannot even claim reimbursement, causing them unjust financial hardship.

4. The Inherent Strength of Mumbai-Based Operations :

The current single-chopper dependency at Surat means that whenever a snag occurs, the entire Tapti Field crew change program dies. In stark contrast, shifting operations back to the **Mumbai Helibase** provides undeniable structural advantages:

- ☐ Multiple standby, backup helicopters are readily available to step in immediately.
- ☐ Larger AW-139 helicopters (15-passenger capacity) can be deployed to clear backlogs instantly.
- ☐ Superior, dignified accommodation is available at the Poonam Nagar Guest House and transit hotels.
- ☐ Smooth, hassle-free expense reimbursement can be seamlessly processed through the existing Webice system.

The Union, standing solid with the signed crew of Rig Sagar Jyoti (representing Drilling, Mechanical, Electrical, Production, and Chemistry cadres) (Letter Attached), demands that higher management immediately approve and execute:

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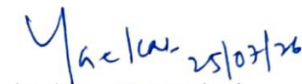
1. **Immediate and permanent shifting of crew change sorties for Rig Sagar Jyoti from Surat to the Mumbai Helibase.**
2. **An independent, comprehensive technical audit** by DGCA-certified auditors into the maintenance practices and engineering failures at the Surat Helibase.
3. **Immediate clearance of the offshore backlog** to relieve the heavily fatigued crew who have exceeded their 21 days offshore shift limits.
4. **A transparent, formal assurance and documentation** proving the airworthiness of any chopper deployed before our workers are asked to board.

Sir, every previous communication has warned you of the mounting risks. We wish to ask you directly today: *If an unfortunate incident or fatal accident occurs after these repeated written warnings, who in senior management will step forward and accept responsibility as the First Person Responsible (FPR)?*

Sir, Please do not wait for an irreversible tragedy to compel your hand.

The Union expects a prompt, decisive response and immediate structural arrangements.

Yours faithfully,



(Vaibhav M. Lavekar)

General Secretary

Copy to :

1. GGM – Head Air Logistics, ONGC Helibase, Mumbai.
2. Head Drilling Services, 11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi Link Road, Mumbai.
3. Head Well Services, 11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi Link Road, Mumbai.
4. GGM - LMDS (SW & Expl.), 11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi, Mumbai.
5. Head HSE, DS, 11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi Link Road, Mumbai.
6. CGM - Head Offshore Logistics, ONGC Mumbai.
7. Head Aviation Safety, ONGC Helibase, Mumbai.
8. Operation I/C, ONGC Helibase, Mumbai.
9. I/C Surat Airport ONGC Operations, Surat, Gujrat.
10. Rig Manager S/Jyoti, 11 High Office Complex, Sion – Dharavi, Mumbai.
11. Dy. CLC (C), Shram Raksha Bhavan, Sion, Mumbai.

Subject: Urgent Escalation: Immediate Intervention Required for Crew Change Helicopter Operations – Rig Sagar Jyoti

Dear Sir,

This is an urgent escalation regarding the deteriorating helicopter operations being carried out from Surat Airport for crew change of Rig Sagar Jyoti. Despite repeated written communications over the last several weeks highlighting serious operational disruptions, recurring helicopter technical failures, increasing crew fatigue, and growing safety concerns, the issues continue to persist without any effective corrective action or response from the concerned authorities.

Multiple emails dated 24.06.2026, 14.07.2026, 15.07.2026, 18.07.2026, and 24.07.2026 have consistently brought these matters to the notice of higher management. Unfortunately, the situation has only worsened.

1. Repeated Helicopter Technical Failures

The helicopter operating from Surat has repeatedly developed technical snags, resulting in frequent cancellation of scheduled crew change sorties.

A serious warning sign occurred on 26.03.2026 when helicopter VT-RRI reportedly developed a technical malfunction shortly after take-off from Surat Airport and had to make an emergency landing. Emergency response teams at Surat Airport were reportedly mobilized. Fortunately, the incident did not result in any casualty, but it highlighted the seriousness of the recurring technical issues.

Subsequently, during July 2026 alone, multiple scheduled sorties were cancelled due to technical defects. Following repeated failures, offshore personnel collectively expressed their unwillingness to board helicopter VT-RRI owing to legitimate safety concerns. This was formally communicated through email on 18.07.2026.

Consequently, helicopter VT-RRF was deployed at Surat with effect from 21.07.2026. However, within merely three days of deployment, this helicopter also developed a technical snag, leading to further cancellation of scheduled crew change sorties.

This clearly indicates that replacing one helicopter with another has not solved the underlying problem.

2. Serious Concern Regarding Maintenance at Surat

An important observation needs immediate attention.

After the technical incident involving VT-RRI, the helicopter was shifted to Juhu Helibase. It is presently operating daily from Mumbai on production duties without any reported operational difficulties.

Similarly, VT-RRF, after being deployed to Surat, also began experiencing technical failures within two days.

While we are not in a position to question the competence of Global Vectra's maintenance organization, these facts create a strong perception that the issue may not lie solely with the helicopters themselves but may instead relate to maintenance practices, engineering support, troubleshooting, or operational management at Surat Helibase.

This aspect deserves immediate independent review.

3. Continuous Crew Change Disruptions

Because of repeated helicopter unserviceability combined with unavoidable monsoon weather, crew changes have virtually come to a standstill.

As on 25.07.2026:

- Incoming backlog: 25 personnel
- Outgoing backlog: 25 personnel

Several ONGC employees have already completed up to 26 consecutive offshore working days.

Several contractual personnel have remained onboard for nearly 42 consecutive days.

Personnel continue to perform demanding 12-hour operational shifts every day.

Such prolonged offshore exposure inevitably results in:

- Physical fatigue
- Mental exhaustion
- Reduced alertness
- Lower morale
- Increased operational risk
- Higher probability of human error

This directly impacts operational safety.

4. Unexplained Payload Restriction

Another issue creating serious operational disruption is the sudden reduction in helicopter payload.

Until recently, the Bell-412 helicopter routinely carried approximately 8–9 personnel per sortie.

However, since the beginning of July, the payload has been restricted to only 5–6 personnel.

Initially it was believed that this restriction was due to adverse monsoon weather.

However, it was subsequently observed that the same helicopter, under similar weather conditions, was carrying its normal payload while operating to nearby Rig GD Chaaru.

Upon seeking clarification, the Global Coordinator shared an internal document issued on Global's letterhead stating that reduced payload would be applicable for Rig Sagar Jyoti during the monsoon season.

The document cited obstruction affecting One Engine Inoperative (OEI) escape requirements as the reason.

This raises several important questions:

- Why was this restriction imposed only on Rig Sagar Jyoti?
- Why was no such restriction applicable earlier when the same helicopter had been operating to the same location?
- Why was no prior communication made to the Rig Management or ONGC Base Office before implementing this operational limitation?
- Why was such an important operational restriction communicated only after repeated enquiries?

It is pertinent to note that the helideck at Rig Sagar Jyoti is equipped with two access routes, including access to C Deck and Forward Jack-house Top.

The sudden implementation of this restriction without prior consultation has significantly reduced crew movement capacity and increased backlog.

5. Operational Limitations of Surat-Based Crew Change

The present Surat-based arrangement suffers from several inherent disadvantages.

A. No Backup Helicopter

The entire Tapti Field presently depends upon a single helicopter.

Whenever that helicopter becomes unserviceable, the entire crew change operation comes to a halt.

No standby helicopter is available.

B. Limited Helicopter Capacity

Only Bell-412 helicopters are operating from Surat.

The maximum seating capacity itself is around nine passengers.

With the present payload restriction, only five to six personnel are being carried.

Normal crew changes generally require movement of 10–12 personnel.

Consequently:

- Personnel are frequently dropped from manifests.
- Crew change backlogs continue to increase.

- Shift planning becomes extremely difficult.

C. Inadequate Accommodation at Surat

Personnel stranded at Surat are accommodated in the Surat Guest House, where adequate facilities are reportedly lacking.

Crew members are compelled to spend from their own pockets for food and other basic necessities.

Furthermore, these expenses are generally not reimbursable because the WebICE system is configured primarily for Mumbai-based helicopter operations.

This causes unnecessary financial hardship to employees.

6. Advantages of Mumbai-Based Operations

Crew change operations from Mumbai offer significant operational advantages.

- Multiple backup helicopters are readily available.
- In case one helicopter becomes unserviceable, another aircraft can be deployed immediately.
- Larger AW-139 helicopters with seating capacity of approximately 15 passengers are available.
- Crew movement is substantially more efficient.
- Chances of backlog are considerably reduced.
- Accommodation facilities at Poonam Nagar Guest House and transit hotels are adequate.
- Personnel can claim helicopter drop expenses through the existing WebICE system without difficulty.

These operational advantages make Mumbai a far more reliable and resilient base for crew change operations.

7. Declining Crew Confidence

Repeated technical failures have severely affected the confidence of offshore personnel.

Many crew members are now apprehensive about boarding helicopters operating from Surat.

This is not merely an operational issue but a matter of workforce confidence in aviation safety.

Safety culture depends not only on technical compliance but also on the confidence that personnel have in the systems intended to protect them.

8. Lack of Response Despite Repeated Escalations

Despite numerous emails, letters, and repeated requests from the Rig, Base Office, and Offshore Management, no substantive response has been received from the concerned authorities.

No accountability has been communicated.

No long-term corrective action has been shared.

No assurance has been provided to offshore personnel.

This continued silence despite repeated safety-related representations is deeply concerning.

9. A Question That Requires Immediate Consideration

Every previous communication has highlighted the increasing safety risks associated with repeated helicopter technical failures and prolonged crew retention offshore.

The question that naturally arises is:

If an unfortunate incident or accident occurs after repeated written warnings have already been issued, who will accept responsibility? Who will be identified as the First Person Responsible (FPR)?

This question deserves an immediate and transparent response before any irreversible event compels one.

Request for Immediate Intervention

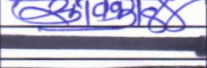
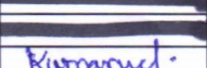
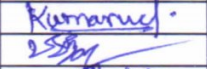
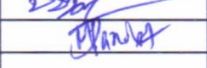
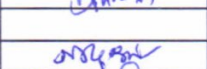
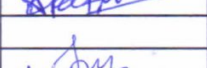
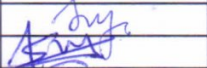
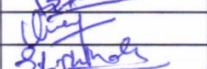
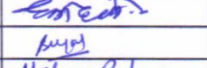
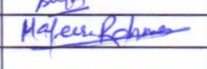
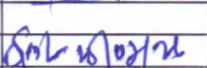
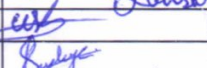
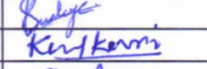
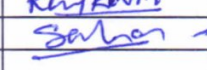
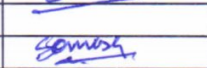
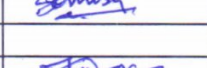
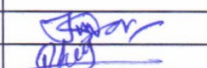
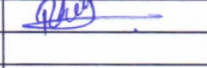
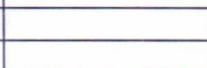
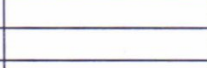
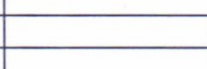
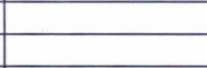
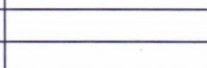
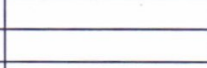
In view of the above facts, we respectfully request the immediate intervention of higher management and seek approval for the following actions:

1. Operation of crew change sorties from Mumbai Helibase only.
2. Independent review of maintenance practices, engineering support, and operational reliability of helicopters operating from Surat.
3. Review of the unexplained payload restriction imposed on Rig Sagar Jyoti and restoration of normal operational capacity, wherever technically feasible.
4. Immediate formulation of a long-term and sustainable crew change strategy for the Tapti Field to ensure uninterrupted operations.
5. Clear communication to all stakeholders regarding the corrective actions being undertaken.

This matter is no longer merely an operational inconvenience. It has become an issue of personnel safety, operational continuity, workforce welfare, and organizational accountability.

We earnestly request immediate intervention before the situation escalates further.

Rig Sagar Jyoti Crew

SR. NO.	FAMILY NAME / GIVEN NAME	RANK/ RATING	DETAILS	COMPANY	SIGNATURE
1	ANUPAM MONDAL	Asstt.Ex.Engr.(Cmtg)	139631	ONGC	
2	AMAN KUSHWAHA	ASSTT.EX.ENGR.(MEC)	141150	ONGC	
3	SUNIL KALE	SR.ENGG.ASSTT.(ELEC)	126398	ONGC	
4	DEEPAK LODHI	EX.ENGR.(DRILLING)	137383	ONGC	
5	TATHAGAT PANKAJ	ASSTT.EX.ENGR.(DRIL)	141476	ONGC	
6	KUMARAVEL M	TECHN.(DRILLING)	126504	ONGC	
7	P. PANDIA RENGARAJA	ASSTT.ROUSTABOUT	136657	ONGC	
8	PALTU MANDAL	Sr. Exe Chemistry	136070	ONGC	
9	DILIP SAINI	GEOLOGIST	141353	ONGC	
10	NAVAJYOTI GOGOI	Asstt.Engr.(Drilling)	125606	ONGC	
11	AMOL KALBHILE	Jr.Engg.Asstt.(Drilling)	140451	ONGC	
12	ARVIND MARANDI	SUPTDG.ENGR.(DRILLI)	125770	ONGC	
13	SUMAIS JALALUDHEEN	ASSTT.EX.ENGR.(MEC)	139521	ONGC	
14	SATISH PURENA	ASSTT.EX.ENGR.(MEC)	141140	ONGC	
15	SIRAJ QURESHI	SR.ENGG.ASSTT.(ELEC)	124878	ONGC	
16	VINAY NYARE	SR.ENGG.ASSTT.(DRIL)	127981	ONGC	
17	SOMNATH SHINDE	TECHN.(MACHINING)	126625	ONGC	
18	GOUROV DAS	ASSTT.ENGR.(MECH)	122921	ONGC	
19	RAHUL AADLINGE	JR.ENGG.ASSTT.(MEC)	140212	ONGC	
20	LOVINDER SINGH	EX.ENGR.(ELECT)	138140	ONGC	
21	DHANANJAY SHIVAJI HAKE	ASSTT.OPTR.(HE)	126393	ONGC	
22	SAJAL SRIVASTAVA	EX.ENGR.(CMTG)	133629	ONGC	
23	NAFEESUR RAHMAN	EX.ENGR.(DRILLING)	136279	ONGC	
24	DIPAK DEORI	Asstt.Ex.Engr.(Drillin)	92436	ONGC	
25	BHAUSAHEB NARODE	JR.TECHN.(WELDING)	140269	ONGC	
26	SAURAV MEENA	Medical Officer	142083	ONGC	
27	UMESH SHAMBHASHIV	Techn.(Welding)	122840	ONGC	
28	SANTOSH BHADANGE	Sr.Engg.Asstt.(Drillin)	128008	ONGC	
29	AKSHAY KULKARNI	Sr.Engg.Asstt.(Drillin)	130582	ONGC	
30	ABHRA SAHA	SUPTDG.CHEMIST	131286	ONGC	
31	WASIM KADRUD ZAMAN	CH.ENGR.(DRILLING)	122649	ONGC	
32	SOMESH SHARMA	EX.ENGR.(ELECT)	134788	ONGC	
33	MAYANK VEDWAL	GEOLOGIST	141593	ONGC	
34	JITENDRA KUMAR MISHRA	EX.ENGR.(CMTG)	135603	ONGC	
35	PRATIK YADAV	JR.ENGG.ASSTT.(INST)	140203	ONGC	
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From: Vaibhav M Lavekar/ONGCL
To: K1 MATHIVANAN/ONGCL@ONGCL
Cc: MAHESANBALAKRISHNA PILLAI/ONGCL@ONGCL
Bcc: PRANAB SARKAR/ONGCL@ONGCL, Bhawesh Kumar Upadhyay/ONGCL@ONGCL, TR Suraj/ONGCL@ONGCL, Suresh Hanumant Nanaware/ONGCL@ONGCL, Sandeep Bhagwan Revandkar/ONGCL@ONGCL, khwaja hajisahab shaikh/ONGCL@ONGCL, Dattaram Ramchandra Tawade/ONGCL@ONGCL, Vinayak N Salvi/ONGCL@ONGCL, P1 Renga Raja/ONGCL@ONGCL, Girish Gajanan Mhatre/ONGCL@ONGCL, Kunal Chandrkant Bhagwat/ONGCL@ONGCL, Gajendra Singh3/ONGCL@ONGCL, MONDEEP KAKATI/ONGCL@ONGCL, sjot_oim@ongc.co.in

Date: Saturday, July 18, 2026 11:56AM
Subject: URGENT: Serious Safety Concern – Repeated Technical Snags in Chopper VT-RRI (Bell 412) operating from Surat Airport.

Respected Sir,

I am writing to formally bring to your immediate attention a critical and recurring safety issue regarding the helicopter deployed for our sorties from Surat Airport.

The aircraft in question—**Bell 412 (Registration: VT-RRI, of GVHL)**—has experienced 3 to 4 technical snags within the span of just 30 days.

Key Concerns:

1. Pattern of Failures: A frequency of 3–4 technical snags in a month indicates a chronic, unresolved mechanical or systemic issue rather than an isolated incident.

2. Loss of Confidence: Due to these repeated failures, the crew and passengers have completely lost confidence in the airworthiness and safety of this specific chopper. Flying under these conditions introduces unacceptable psychological stress and operational risk.

3. Stand on Safety: In alignment with ONGC's uncompromising stance on safety and "Target Zero" incidents, we have collectively decided not to fly in this specific helicopter (VT-RRI) until the underlying issues are thoroughly resolved and verified.

– Immediate Replacement: We request the immediate deployment of an alternative, fully airworthy helicopter to ensure our offshore/field sorties continue without operational disruption.

Comprehensive Technical Audit: A thorough investigation and root-cause analysis by the operator and DGCA-certified auditors to permanently rectify these recurring snags.

Safety Clearance: Formal assurance and documentation proving the chopper is 100% safe before it is ever reintroduced into ONGC service.

Safety cannot be compromised for operational expediency. We trust management will take swift, decisive action to address this hazard and protect the lives of the crew and personnel.

Looking forward to your prompt response and confirmation of an alternative arrangement.

Yours Sincerely,

Vaibhav M. Lavekar
General Secretary
P.E.U. ONGC (W.O.U.)
Mob. No. 9969226898