

Event Date: 27<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Report Date: 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005

## Offshore Oil Platform Fire, India

Type of Event:	Oil Platform Fire
Date of Event:	27/07/2005
Location:	Off the west coast of India
Number Killed:	At least 12 people
Damage Estimate:	-
Insured Loss Estimate:	Platform and support vessel insured for a total of USD255 million
Insured:	Includes Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
Carriers:	-



### Summary

A major fire destroyed a key offshore oil drilling platform off the west coast of India on Wednesday, killing at least twelve people. Reports said the platform collapsed into the water during the fire, which emergency services managed to extinguish late Wednesday. The platform is located in the Bombay High offshore oil field, off the coast of Maharashtra state, around 100 miles (160 kilometres) west of Mumbai. The blaze occurred around 16:30 local time (11:00 UTC). Oil and Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said the platform was “completely destroyed by the fire”. Mr Aiyar said heavy swells pushed a nearby support vessel into the platform, sparking the blaze. Mr Aiyar added that the vessel and an oil rig were also demolished by the fire. The Indian Express said the vessel was the MV Sagar Suraksha. The ship was insured for USD60 million, according to Agence France Presse. Noble Corporation confirmed its Noble Charlie Yester cantilever jackup rig was involved in the fire.

The Bombay High North (BHN) Platform is owned by the state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and produces 110,000 barrels per day. It is connected to 15 oil wells and pumps oil to the coast. The wells shut automatically once the fire started. An ONGC official said the platform was insured for USD195 million, according to Reuters News. He added that a new structure may cost USD300 million.

Reports said around 384 workers were on the platform at the time of the blaze. Some survivors were being treated for burns. Several people are still missing, according to reports. Emergency crews rescued at least 367 people. Helicopters were deployed to evacuate people while the navy and coast guard also helped in the rescue operation. Efforts were hampered by bad weather, however. Some workers left the platform on lifeboats or crossed a bridge to another rig to escape the flames. Reports said other employees jumped into the Arabian Sea. ONGC said it has started cleaning up the oil spill caused by the accident. The oil spill stretched up to 10 nautical miles, a company statement said.

The destruction of the platform is expected to affect oil output. Mr Aiyar said the loss of crude oil production is expected to be "considerable". ONGC's chairman, Subir Raha, said tens of thousands of barrels of production loss per day is expected. Mr Raha added that a new platform will have to be built to replace the BHN platform, which could take up to two years. However, ONGC said it hopes to restore about 70% of the lost production within a month. Other operations at Bombay High were continuing as normal, according to reports. The Bombay High field produces 14% of the oil India consumes and accounts for about 40% of all domestic production, according to Reuters News.

*Sources: BBC News, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, Reuters News, Dow Jones International News, BBC Monitoring Newsfile*

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