ONGC experts bring ‘Pethai’ hit offshore drilling rig in India’s Eastern Coast to normal

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A team of experts mobilised by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) brought cyclone hit semi-submersible rig ‘Olinda Star’ back to normal. The rig had reported tilting at an angle in the aftermath of cyclone Pethai which hit coastal Andhra Pradesh last week.

The rig ‘Olinda Star’ had been deployed for ONGC operations on the East Coast of India. After Met Department’s cyclone warning, the 111 crew members working on the rig were evacuated on 14th and 15th December itself. ONGC made elaborate and quick arrangements for evacuating persons and deployed helicopters and boats.

As the weather had been rough with large swells hampering the approach to the rig via sea, Indian Navy helicopters were pressed into service to ferry expert crew to the rig. Twelve persons including salvage team members, boarded the rig on December 21 morning and carried out the salvage operation promptly, re-stabilizing the rig. ONGC’s top management, including CMD Mr Shashi Shanker, were personally monitoring the development.

As per the inspection, the rig does not show any structural damage, and equipment appears to be operable. The salvage crew successfully started the ballasting system to level the rig and could bring it to normal in few hours. The observations reported so far have been very encouraging. The rig’s main generators are on and other machines and equipment are being tested and put to operations. The salvage team has confirmed that rig is safe to operate now.

ONGC along with its operator associates responded to the challenge with utmost alacrity and ensured safety of both onboard crew members and the rig. The rig will soon resume normal drilling operations.

This would perhaps be a record time in which a potential oil field incident of this kind could be successfully handled. International experts were mobilized very quickly and taken onboard to handle the crises. The Indian Navy and local administration provided timely support during the operations.
Rig Olinda Star is semisubmersible drilling rig hired by ONGC for operating in deeper water of East Coast for its ongoing projects. The rig is fully certified by all required international statutory and regulatory agencies as well by national safety regulators like OISD. The rig has been drilling for ONGC at East Coast since January 2018 and has been performing as expected.

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