82 die in gas explosion-related fires in Narayanganj in 3 yrs

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Online Desk: At least 82 people died in gas explosion-related fires in Narayanganj over the last three years, according to police and fire service. This excludes the number of victims of such fire incidents who died while receiving treatment. Although gas pipeline leaks and cylinder explosions are the leading causes of these recorded fires, threats still persist. A blast in Pashchim Talla Baitus Salam Mosque of Narayanganj killed 37 on September 4, 2020. There have also been accusations of irregularities in the investigation process, and the accused in the majority of cases remain uncharged due to the slow process of investigation.

According to police and fire service, there were 104 gas explosion-related fire incidents in Narayanganj district in 2022. Sixty-nine of them were caused by flaws in the gas pipeline, 34 incidents were reportedly caused by cylinder and air conditioner blasts. A total of 18 people, including children, died and 25 were injured in those incidents. There were 114 gas explosion-related fire incidents in 2021. Pipeline flaws were responsible for 96 incidents. That year, 20 people were killed and more than 50 were injured.

A total of 44 people died and 26 were injured in 106 gas explosion-related fire incidents in 2020. Seventy-one incidents were caused by gas line faults, while the rest were caused by cylinder and air conditioner blasts. That year, 37 people died in a massive explosion at the Pashchim Talla Baitus Salam Mosque. Locals of the district say that the authorities show concern for a few days following an incident. But their efforts to address these threats got nipped in the bud every time, they said. Locals reportedly file complaints about gas leaks, but no significant action is taken to address this serious issue.

Fire Service and Civil Defence officials said that the negligence of Titas gas authorities and lack of awareness among locals are to blame for many incidents. Fakhruddin, deputy director of Narayanganj Fire Service, said, “We urge residents to stay cautious and inspect their gas pipelines for leaks.” Mamunur Rashid, deputy general manager of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited in Narayanganj, said, “Gas pipelines inside the homes are the responsibility of the consumers. All we do is distribute the lines.”

“The majority of fire incidents are caused by faults in house lines. Gas leaks cause explosions when burners are left on,” he added. “Customers need to be cautious and should never leave gas stoves on,” he said. Chai Lau Marma, additional superintendent of police (Crime and Operations) in Narayanganj, said, “We file cases in response to complaints. After investigating, we put the names on the chargesheet and file in court.” Narayanganj residents urged the government to take measures to address these fire risks promptly.