

Gas Odorant: Gas explosions due to authorities' negligence

Report by Parvez Reza, Ekattor TV

Over the past five years, there have been over 100 incidents of natural or methane gas explosions across the country, resulting in more than a hundred fatalities. Significant incidents include explosions in Siddique Bazar and Moghbazar, where 38 people died. Investigations revealed that people were unaware of gas accumulations due to the lack of odorants in the gas supply, despite regulations mandating their use.

The Natural Gas Safety Regulations, 1991, require the addition of a special odorant to gas before distribution to alert residents of leaks. However, an investigation by Ekattor TV, with support of BUET's chemical engineering department, found no presence of the odorant Mercaptan in gas samples from various locations.

Major findings of the story are: gas samples from multiple Dhaka neighborhoods and other cities showed no presence of Mercaptan; a small amount of odorant was detected, but it was insufficient to be smelled in Cumilla; Titas Gas, the primary supplier, has not been adding enough odorant, citing reasons like employee discomfort and attempts to prevent public panic.

Officials and experts criticized Titas and other gas companies for their negligence. The lack of odorant means leaks go undetected, increasing the risk of explosions. Despite the danger, the companies have not taken adequate measures to ensure safety.

The investigation highlights a severe public safety threat due to the failure of gas supply companies to comply with safety regulations, potentially leading to more tragic incidents in the future.