

Rat-eaten leaking LPG pipe leads to explosion at Tonca

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PANAJI: Ten flats, located in the Kamat Complex – Phase II, Tonca, were damaged, at 5.30 a.m. on Thursday, following an explosion that occurred due to LPG that leaked from a stove connecting pipe, however, no casualties were reported.

It is learnt that the explosion took place after the leaked gas came in contact with a switchboard. The LPG company officials found that the connecting pipe was eaten up by rats.

Jeston Silveira (26), who resides in the flat along with his dog, suffered heavy damages due to the explosion. The loss has been put at Rs 40 lakh.

A part of the kitchen wall of the flat collapsed following the explosion while a section of the two-storey residential building three flats, also suffered damages, the loss due to which was put at Rs 4 lakh.

The intensity of the explosion was such that it led to the damage of the main doors and window panes of the six flats located in the neighboring block situated some 50 meters away from the block where the blast took place.

Personnel of emergency services rushed to the spot at around 6 a.m. after they were informed about the incident. The workers of the electricity department secured the building by cutting off the supply; the ATS and other rescue teams were also pressed into service.

Director of fire and emergency services Ashok Menon described the incident as a ‘freak’ one. Menon said that “prima facie it shows that the explosion occurred due to the accumulation of gas that leaked from the faulty pipe and due to the usage of industrial gas regulator. The gas leaked in large volume, and as the cooking gas has a high expansion rate, a spark from electrical panel due to voltage fluctuation could have possibly led to the explosion.”

“We are surprised that no fire broke out, when in such incidents fire always happen. We have asked the gas company officials to initiate a probe into the high intensity blast and possible violation of safety norms,” he said.

LPG company officials found that the gas pipe was eaten up by rats.

“Most of the cooking gas-related accidents occur due to leakages from the rubber tubing, faulty fitting of regulator, and poor handling of appliances and leaving the cooking unattended, resulting in the vessel to overflow, which in turn extinguishes the burner and causes gas leak,” said senior fire officer.

As most accidents take place in kitchen, adequate safety measures must be taken, he added.