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Shin, Hak-CheolChairman of the Board/Director/CEO Appointed ...

LG Chem aims to reinforce the competitiveness of its core technologies, ...

LG Chem is taking the lead in creating a better environment for the future in ...

LG Chem to Target Automotive Adhesive Market with Comprehensive Solutions ...

The Visakhapatnam gas leak, also referred to as the Vizag gas leak, was an industrial accident that occurred at the LG Polymers chemical plant in the R. R. Venkatapuram village of the Gopalapatnam neighbourhood, located at the outskirts of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India, during the early morning of 7 May 2020. The resulting vapour cloud spread over a radius of around 3.0 km (1.9 mi), affecting the nearby areas and villages. As per the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the death toll was 13, and more than 1,000 people became sick after being exposed to the gas.

Preliminary investigations concluded that the accident was likely the result of insufficient maintenance of units storing the styrene monomer, improper storage, and operation errors.[2] The Government of Andhra Pradesh announced an ex gratia of INR1 crore (US$120,000 or EUR120,000) for each family of the deceased, as well as funds for the injured. A budget of INR30 crore (US$3.6 million or EUR3.7 million) was allocated for the compensation of all those affected.[3]

However, LG Chem spokesperson Choi Sang-kyu told the Associated Press (AP) that the company had followed Indian laws and operated based on the officials" guidelines at the state and federal level. He said that the affidavit was a pledge of compliance with the law, rather than an admission of violating the law.[10] After the 2006 notification, Choi said that the company consulted the ministry and was told that no clearance was required. However, Environment Secretary C. K. Mishra told the AP that the plant would have no requirement of clearance in 2006, but a clearance was imperative for any expansion or production change thereafter.[6]

Late at night on 7 May, police ordered the evacuation of people in a 2 km (1.2 mi) radius of the leak. However, police subsequently stated that this evacuation was precautionary and that there had not been a second leak.[24][25]

Experts from the central government who inspected the plant said that it would have faced a catastrophe had the violation of safety norms at other storage facilities of the plant gone unnoticed for a few more days. They said those facilities were vulnerable to a leak of vapour on a larger scale and stored in a high-risk condition. An expert said polymerization was noticed in another storage.[26]

According to Deccan Chronicle, two experts from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Dr. Anjan Ray, director of the Indian Institute of Petroleum, and Shantanu Geete, an industry expert, inspected the storage facilities of the plant, as well as the Vizag port. Dr. Ray, an expert in styrene, recommended that the government immediately remove the materials from the facility. On 11 May 2020, the Andhra Pradesh government directed the company to remove 13,000 metric tonnes (MT) of material out of the country. With the Ministry of Shipping"s help, the state government arranged two vessels to carry the load, split into portions of 8,000 MT and 5,000 MT, to the company"s headquarter in Seoul.[26]

Mekapati Goutham Reddy, minister of industries of Andhra Pradesh, said that the preliminary conclusion from the experts" inspections was that the storage facilities were not designed to keep the material for a long duration. However, the plant personnel claimed that the material was emptied every 10 to 15 days and never stored more than the assigned period.[26]

To prevent further dangerous polymerization and self-heating of the styrene, 500 kilograms (1,100 lb) of the polymerization inhibitor 4-tert-butylcatechol (PTBC) was airlifted by the Government of Andhra Pradesh and sent to the crippled factory. Additionally, the central government flew in a National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) specialized CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) team from Pune to the site.[28][27]