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'Pipeline fire due to collective failure'

NEW DELHI: The devastating fire at state-run GAIL India Ltd's pipeline in Andhra Pradesh that killed 22 persons in June this year was a result of collective failure of the system, an oil ministry probe has concluded.

GAIL's Tatipaka-Kondapalli pipeline, which was built in 2001 to move dry natural gas to Lanco Power Plant, transported gas as also water and condensate coming from ONGC's wells. Water and condensate corroded the pipeline, leading to gas and condensate leaking to surface where a lighting of a stove led to a blast and subsequent fire on June 27. An inquiry committee, headed by the ministry's Joint Secretary (Refineries) Rajesh Kumar Singh, in its report blamed "inadequate systems/approach" for the accident. The agreement between producer ONGC and transporter GAIL does not provide for the quality of gas to be supplied as is the case in several marginal and isolated fields in Krishna Godavari and Caurvey basins.

The report said it was difficult to establish individual culpability. - PTI