

# FACTORY FIRES AND WORKERS

## A Capital Story

### Bawana fire: North body, govt department blame each other

The North Corporation report, however, states that DSIIDC and industries department of the Delhi government are the competent authorities to take punitive or legal action in case of violations of allotment of relocation plots, and also violations of conditions of lease allotments.

### Delhi: Fire in plastic factory in Narela, fire tenders rushed to the spot

The cause of the fire is unknown at the moment. The factory where the fire broke out was a three-story building.

## A REPORT

### Delhi inferno: 800 factory fires recorded in city in last 2 years

### Charred lives: Fire in Delhi's Mundka exposes criminal negligence of authorities

The massive fire in a factory in west Delhi that killed at least 27 workers exposes the criminal negligence practised by employers and governments that dilute labour laws to promote the ease of doing business.

### Fire trap Bawana: Why majority of units take no precautions, fly under radar

A blaze that killed 17 has thrown the spotlight on the industrial area, which came up as a refuge for small-scale units. But with 1,500 fire calls in a year, and factories packed like matchboxes, making Bawana safe remains a distant dream.

**People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR)**  
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# PREFACE

Incidents of factory fires are common in Delhi and get routinely reported in the media. Those that cause great damage and loss of a number of lives receive extensive media coverage. [According to a press report](#), the Delhi Fire Service estimated that over a span of two years, up until the middle of February 2024, there were eight hundred factory fires in Delhi, i.e., approximately four hundred factory fires a year or more than one incident daily in the capital city. Not all of them got reported upon in the media. Yet, even a partial list of incidents compiled from incidents covered in mainstream print media gives an indication of the considerable frequency of factory fires in the capital city (see Annexure 2). Many of these incidents appear to have occurred in ‘authorised’ industrial areas.

PUDR has previously investigated and written about [incidents of factory fires](#) in Delhi. Our reports, like most media reports on the issue, have investigated industrial fires after they have occurred, examining their causes and consequences, etc. This present report draws upon incidents of factory fires we have investigated over the last five years and seeks to focus on the underlying issue of why factory fires occur repeatedly in Delhi’s industrial areas.

While we might be familiar with statistics about factory fires which appear in the media and indicate the scale of the problem, what these mean on the ground—especially for the workers, the family members of those who die, workers who survive these traumatic incidents, the injured and those who

may not have physical injuries but find it difficult to go back to such work—is lost sight of. How, for instance, did the families of Nisha or Harbir, who died in the fires in Mundka (in May 2022) and Bawana (in September 2023) respectively, or the many other workers who died in the factory fires, survive after the deaths of these primary earners? What happened to Mohd. Alam (Munna), one of the workers who was severely injured in the Basai Darapur blast incident (January 2019), how did he manage to afford the treatment, get papers for accessing compensation? These and many other stories remain unheard and untold. The fate of these workers and their families, their struggles for survival, usually remain the object of public attention, or policy makers’ concern only till the grant of compensation at best. Yet even in cases where compensation *is* granted by the Labour Commissioner, the procedural and practical challenges and paperwork required sometimes make it very difficult for survivors to access the amount. Injured workers who survive the fires most commonly move on to work in other units in similarly hazardous conditions, working there till the next fire breaks out in turn. Not working is not an option. For workers, their survival depends on them continuing to work, and yet, working in these conditions threatens their survival.

This stands true for workers across the informal sector in India, across industries and regions, but perhaps what makes factory fires different is the fact that these threaten workers’ lives most dramatically and immediately. These aspects of industrial fires—in addition to their frequency and their context within the history and geography of industrial development in Delhi—led PUDR to write this report.

However it must be noted at the outset that this report too falls short of presenting the texture and experience of workers in these factory fires and

their aftermath. Our teams have also faced problems in meeting injured workers and their families, and speaking to them in detail about their experience of dealing with the aftermath of the fires. The difficulties were/are many. For instance, there were commonly no official records of their employment or addresses that we could access, and many workers lived inside the factories and moved from one factory to another, taken along by contractors. Nobody around the factories knew them, and in one of the incidents, when we were able to trace some workers who had gone on to other workplaces in other areas of Delhi-NCR, we found that they were struggling to get compensation, entirely dependent on lawyers and the Labour Commissioner, and fearful that if they even spoke to us about their experience of work and the fire, they may not be able to access the compensation.

However, we hope that the report will lead readers to pay more attention to the specific and wider context of factory fires in Delhi. We hope it will also show them the need to move beyond routine statistics and to understand the impact of these incidents on those who labour in these units. For these workers are literally and figuratively trapped in these contexts and bear the heaviest cost of Delhi's factory fires.

This PUDR report, titled *Factory Fires and Workers: A Capital Story*, focuses on the context and conditions around factory fires and the laws and policies that are responsible for them, as much as the specific causes of electrical short circuits or build-up of gases or chemicals at particular sites of the fires. It also directs attention to the aftermath of these incidents and the impact of factory fires on the lives of workers and their families, and seeks to understand why the frequent recurrence of these fires have become commonplace. In the course of investigations into these issues, PUDR teams have met various

factory workers from different industrial areas where the fires had occurred, family members of deceased or injured workers, union members in localities where they were active, police officials, and accessed interviews with officials of the Delhi Fire Service, the Labour Department and Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) at Bawana. We have examined the Delhi Fire Service Act and its working, and looked at the implementation of the Employees Compensation Act, as well as other laws and executive policies , and sought to follow the prosecution of some cases of industrial fires in Courts.

The following is the PUDR report.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE WIDER CONTEXT OF DELHI'S FACTORY FIRES

A brief outline of Delhi's industrial development in the last six decades would enable us to understand some important aspects of the context in which Delhi's factory fires occur. Delhi has been a hub for small scale factories, and even though between the 1950s to the 1980s it saw the emergence of some larger scale factories, by the 1990s, these had closed down and there was a renewed mushrooming of very small and small scale units producing a diverse variety of products. Most of these units were/are in the informal sector, comprising very few workers, evading regulation in different ways. A large percentage of workers in Delhi have been and are migrants. There was also concentrated in-migration, particularly during some periods, primarily because of demand created by different kinds of development projects, such as the extension of the city or events like the Asian Games of 1982, the Commonwealth Games of 2010, and the metro rail project in the 2000s among others.<sup>1</sup> In 1962, the First Master Plan of Delhi was announced which sought to accommodate the surge of industrial units and migrant workers in the city as the city expanded and grew. The proposal of designated industrial areas in the peripheries of Delhi had been suggested early on. The period of the next Master Plan of 1990—Millenium Master Plan—saw an increase of

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<sup>1</sup> Abhinav Sinha, *In the Valley of Historical Time: Towards the History of the Working Class Movement in Delhi* (Brill, 2024)

industrial units and migrant workers. Most of the workers lived in unauthorised colonies and the pattern of numerous small units in the unorganised sector remained the norm. It was during this period, i.e., in the late 1990s, in the wake of a court judgment, that many units were relocated to the newly demarcated industrial areas in the geographical margins of the capital—discussed in the next section of this report. The Third Master Plan—Master Plan Delhi 2021—was notified in 2007, and remains in force officially as the Draft Fourth Master Plan of 2041, which has been approved by the Delhi Development Authority early in 2023 but has not been notified. With shopping malls, airports, hotels, flyovers and several other such features, this plan aims at making Delhi a global city. As the industrial areas in the peripheries of the city have grown and are sought to be managed more efficiently, migrant workers too have continued to stream in. The plight of the city’s growing workforce engaged in factories across the city has not been a concern in any of Delhi’s Master Plans. The focus of the plans from the outset has been on ‘managing’ workers, the industrial units that many of them work in, and relocating them to what were then the peripheries of the city. These attempts of the authorities were/are also continuously defied and industrial units and workers in these units continued to occupy areas in crowded parts of the city, giving rise to the patchwork of ‘unauthorised’ and ‘authorised’ industrial areas.

While there had been periodic attempts to relocate industries to designated ‘conforming’ areas, the late 1990s saw a more significant attempt of this nature, citing the issue of pollution caused by factories.



## Delhi's Industrial Areas

A number of the factory fires in Delhi have taken place in areas notified officially as authorised 'industrial areas,' as mentioned. At present, Delhi has 29 planned industrial estates/areas—see [Economic Survey of Delhi 2023-24](#)—and 4 flatted factories complexes. Out of the total 33 industrial complexes (areas and flatted complexes) 24 are currently maintained by the DSIIDC (Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation).

While some industrial areas already existed before 1995, and were set up by Delhi's Industries Department, a major expansion occurred after 1996. As the website of the DSIIDC states, it was the [MC Mehta](#) Supreme Court order (dated 19.04.1996 in I.A. No. 22 in Civil Writ Petition No. 4677 85; M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India and others) which raised issues of public safety in the context of polluting and hazardous industries located in densely populated areas and mandated the installation of measures to control pollution within these industries and their relocation. Arising out of [an oleum gas leak in the Delhi factory](#)—on 4 December 1985 in Shriram Foods and Fertilisers in Kirti Nagar—the order specifically observed that non-residential activities were to be permitted in residential premises only under certain conditions as laid down in Delhi's Master Plan 2001. A 'High Powered Committee' was constituted in Delhi with a view to ensure that the provisions of the Master Plan were complied with. The committee received 43045 applications from factories for grant of permission to operate from their existing locations. Out of these, only 376 applicants were granted permission to continue while others had to be closed down if they did not relocate. The initial deadline was set for 1 January 1997 but was extended

since there was, at that time, no place for these factories to relocate. Over the next few years, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT) took steps to acquire land and develop industrial estates to relocate industrial units operating in these residential or non-conforming areas.

## Allocation of Plots – The Small Unit Norm

Here, it may be useful to highlight a peculiarity of these plots allotted in these authorised industrial areas that came up in Delhi's peripheries about twenty-five years ago. The majority of the plots allotted were small in size. This feature came to have a particular relevance for factory fires in Delhi, and more specifically, for regulations for fire prevention.

By about 1998–1999, following the order to close down polluting industries and relocate them to conforming industrial areas, the Department of Industries in Delhi received a total of [51214 applications for allotment of industrial plots](#) and 637 for flats. Many of these applications were accepted and plots allotted. The High Powered Committee—mentioned above—also decided that [only four categories of plots were to be allotted](#), namely, 100, 150, 200, and 250 square meters. It was further decided that 48.7% of the plots that were to be distributed would be 100 square metres in size. **Altogether 82.4 % of the plots to be allocated would be under 250 square meters**, and only 17.6% of the plots allotted as per policy in these authorised industrial areas were 250 square meters in size. Plots smaller than 100 square meters were to be accommodated in flatted factories. Plots were granted on long term leases to the allottees. Factories manufacturing various kinds of goods were relocated, with the largest number involved in auto parts, light

engineering and service industries, followed by electrical goods and appliances, printing paper products and allied packaging, plastic polymer and petroleum based products, etc.

## What is ‘Authorised’ about Delhi’s ‘Authorised’ Industrial Areas?

When authorised industrial areas were set up in Delhi and factories relocated to these in the late 1990s, the official understanding was that these would enable decongestion of the city. As the [DSIIDC website notes](#), at the outset, ‘the goal’ of relocating industries to approved industrial ‘estates’ was ‘also to reduce environmental pollution in residential areas and to provide environment friendly conditions in alternative localities.’ It was recognized that the NCT (National Capital Territory) had emerged as ‘one of the biggest centres of small-scale industries in the country,’ this was necessary and presumably these industrial areas would allow the ‘poor quality of environment’ to be remedied. The official perspective was that prior to the relocation, the city, especially areas around industrial units where production and manufacturing took place, were marked by open drains, polluted effluent waste, etc., ‘affecting the health of the people.’ This, according to the official view, was ‘[largely due to uncontrolled/unauthorised development of industrial units](#)’ and would be remedied by relocation to the new industrial areas. Another aspect that lay behind the move to relocate was the ‘poor management as well as tardy implementation of development plans’ that caused not just mis-utilisation of land use but also ‘grave problems of traffic and transportation in the city.’ The actual experience of relocation of industry has been documented by scholars who have highlighted the complete

disregard for workers that marked the whole process. The fact that in the original oleum gas leak three workers of the same factory had been critically impacted, and the fact that workers' rights to clean environment needed to be considered, as did their right to life and livelihood, were not concerns for the Supreme Court or the government when the Court ordered the closing and relocation of factories. Calling the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) by *MC Mehta*—that occasioned the relocation—‘[the case that felled a city](#)’, a scholar has shown how in response to the Court ultimatum in 1999–2000, the government ordered closure of all nonconforming units leading to the closure of almost one lakh units in one week. Riots and a general strike followed and in the violence at the time, three workers were shot dead and hundreds injured. A city wide forum of trade unions, civil society and rights groups called the Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch had been formed at the time. Even as deadlines for relocation were extended until 2002, thousands of factories closed down and several were shifted to these new industrial areas, while others moved to areas in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

The setting up of these industrial areas thus began with dislocation for numerous workers and violation of their rights. Yet, for those who did make the shift, to work in the factories in these so called ‘authorised’/‘conforming’ industrial areas, it did not lead to any significant betterment of workers’ lives and their working conditions. Inattentive to the ground reality in these areas, adjectives like ‘authorised’ used in conjunction with ‘industrial areas’ created an impression that they adhered to legal and constitutional norms – that labour rights are respected and laws followed, in addition to adherence to fire safety standards and pollution standards. But as numerous media reports observed, and PUDR’s own earlier [report](#) show, the instances of the factory

fires in Delhi's industrial areas discussed in this report show, 'authorisation' or 'state regulation' of these industrial areas does not imply that even minimum wages are given, let alone concern for other labour right (see Chapter 2). Apparently, it is entirely compatible with the persistence and renewal of informality, whether in terms of working conditions, safety at work, or workers' rights to organise collectively etc.

On the other hand, the State's institutional commitment to factory owners is openly stated, the DSIIDC declaring its commitment to factory owners during the relocation of industries goes far beyond fulfilling the Court's directives. It openly declared that it accepted its '[onerous responsibility of fulfilling the dreams of industrial entrepreneurs of Delhi](#)' while carrying out the relocation, and setting up the latter. Describing its contribution on its website, the DSIIDC notes that it had 'taken significant steps poised to overhaul and bring about a holistic transformation in the flourishing capital. Dreams have been realised and lives positively impacted through diverse projects which are at various stages of commencement and/or execution.' Its main work seems to have been associated with activities such as allotment of plots on long term lease, development and maintenance of infrastructure, roads, water supply, and drainage. It is important to note that since 2011, the DSIIDC has relegated the maintenance and development of four industrial estates—Okhla, Patparganj, Bawana and Narela—under the Public Private Partnership model (PPP) to other agencies. The operation, maintenance of infrastructure is now given to the private companies like Bawana Infra in Bawana, which is practically in-charge of all major infrastructure and maintenance work in the areas on the ground.

It is clear from the patterns that have emerged in the course of our investigations into factory fires over the last five years that these grand expectations expressed by DSIIDC—of a ‘holistic transformation’—have not been fulfilled. As mentioned, Delhi’s industrial areas are marked by a very large proportion of informal units and numerous informal practices such as the practice of not providing fire safety provisions. In fact, the State is now pro-actively following a policy of marking certain hitherto unauthorised areas as so-called ‘redevelopment areas.’ This is being furthered under the present government’s ‘Ease of Doing Business’ (EODB) policy, adopted actively in the context of Delhi since 2016. Under this policy articulated in [2007](#), but especially developed in the context of the EODB policy and spelt out with specific regard to [Delhi in 2016](#), a provision was made for factory owners—for many kinds of factories considered unauthorised so far—to integrate their units into the Master Plan of Delhi 2021 through payment of some ‘condonation’ fee and providing some undertakings. It seems that the companies are only required to give an undertaking to abide by some norms such as pollution control. Substantively, the factories in these so-called ‘redeveloped’ areas could continue with their usual labour and environmental practices by means of aforementioned undertakings and assurances of providing fire safety and labour safety mechanisms. Areas like Mundka and Basai Darapur—where the remaining two incidents PUDR has covered in this report occurred—have since 2016 been included in the areas to be accommodated in the list of ‘redeveloped’ areas in Delhi.

The incidents of factory fires PUDR has investigated can be understood better in the context of this background of industrial development in Delhi. Equally, the investigations show precisely how a State [‘regulated informality’](#)

operates on the ground in the capital city, which abets capital and ensures that workers remain in a state of continuous vulnerability.

# CHAPTER 2

## PATTERNS IN THE FIRES





Over the last five years or so, PUDR investigated some incidents of factory fires/blasts, and the main details of a few of these incidents are given in Annexure 1.

- o Basai Darapur (incident of 3.1.2019)
- o Bawana (one incident of 15.2.2019)
- o Narela (one incident of 19.2.2019)
- o Mundka (incident of 13.5.22)
- o Bawana (incident of 20.9.23)

Certain patterns, which are highlighted below, emerged in the course of these investigations and examination of these incidents.

## The Sites of the Factory Fires/Blasts

The incidents of fire took place in both authorised areas such as Bawana and Narela, and also in areas like Basai Darapur and Mundka, which are categorised as ‘redevelopment areas’ under the [Master Plan for Delhi 2021](#). There were also loopholes in the legality of these factory sites. In the Basai Darapur incident for instance, it was alleged that the factory was working illegally. [Newspaper reports](#) claimed that several complaints were lodged at the time regarding the practices, infrastructure, and illegality of the site. Apparently, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation had served a closure notice to the owner a month before, and sealing activity was to be carried out. The accident occurred one week prior to the date of sealing. The PUDR fact finding team also found contradictory accounts from the police officials responsible for the area.

In all these incidents, despite the fact that all units handled chemicals, paints, inflammable substances of some kinds, and despite the commonness of electrical fires, no fire safety arrangements existed. In the Basai Darapur incident of 03.01.2019, the work involved painting—‘paint-coating’—fan blades, which required the use of a furnace and LPG cylinders. In the Bawana incident of 15.02.2019, the factory made nail polish, and the work involved dealing extensively with chemicals. Again, in the Narela incident of 19.02.2019, materials such as plastic, rubber and chemicals that were used for making slippers, or *chappals*, and inflammable materials were kept in various areas of the unit. In the Mundka incident of 13.05.2022, inflammable chemicals were used in the factory for screen printing the boxes in which items such as routers and phones were packed. In the Bawana incident of 20.09.2023 which PUDR investigated, the work done involved crushing discarded cigarette lighters—with leftover inflammable fluids in them—to make plastic pellets. Highly flammable materials were constantly present and being imploded in the factory. Yet, none of these hazardous activities were brought to the notice of the authorities, and no measures were taken to protect the workers. As the FIR in the Bawana incident of 20.03.2023 at Bawana recorded, when prior to the fire, workers complained to the owner about the hazards of the work, the factory owner dismissed their concerns and ordered them to continue working. Our investigations also led to the—quite foreseeable—conclusion that the absence of worker unions exacerbated their conditions, and rendered them without the necessary support to report their vulnerabilities to the dangerous nature of their work.

Two of the five incidents investigated by PUDR were the result of explosions or blasts, while three were caused by electrical short-circuiting. While the blasts were directly caused by inflammable materials that were used on the

premises, fires caused by short circuits wreaked far greater havoc because of the added presence of inflammable materials. In both blasts and fire incidents, what stands out is the consistent and complete lack of attention to the safety of workers. Even though it is legally mandated to remove/prevent the production of gas, dust, vapour which may explode on ignition—Section 37 (1) and 38(1), [The Factories Act, 1948](#)— several countermeasures are taken by owners to bypass the crucial fire safety arrangements. All the units which we investigated were small in size ranging from 100–200 square metres in area, each employing a small number of workers, usually not exceeding twenty. The question of small size and numbers is a crucial one in cases of factory fires and is discussed further in Chapter 3.

## Labour Practices and Safety of Workers

An investigation by PUDR into the working conditions of the factories revealed that even basic legal requirements such as minimum wages and adequate working hours were not met. Workers in the Bawana factory, in the incident of 20.09.2023, were not paid more than Rs. 15000, which is less than the legally mandated Minimum Wage in Delhi (see Annexure 1). One of the workers claimed that the Basai Darapur factory, which saw the death of seven workers, paid Rs. 6500 for eight hours of work and four hours of overtime to the workers. In the Cofe Impex factory at Mundka which was the site of the fire on 13.05.2022, it was reported that their salary was around Rs. 7500. This, too, was paid to them on completing at least two hundred and fifty boxes of the wifi routers. They had to necessarily work overtime and had no paid leave except on Sundays. Majority of the workers were women, and if they took more leave, they were reprimanded and their salaries deducted.

Shortly before the incident, new guards and supervisors were appointed in the factory who were stricter, surveilled more, and did not allow workers to take their phones into the factory. During their workday, they would get only thirty minutes of rest at an unfixed time of the day and tea was served to them twice a day. Common sensibilities and general experiences with working would inform that these nominal breaks for such intensive work clearly does not provide adequate rest, or even mandated rest which is necessitated in the legal provision for rest/intervals between work—Section 55, The Factories Act, 1948. As per this provision, every five hours of work must mandatorily be followed by thirty minutes of interval.

In Delhi, the fire safety norms governing such industries have been laid out by the [Delhi Fire Services Department](#). These also mention measures to be undertaken for a fire incident, like the construction of more than one exit gate in these buildings for a faster and more practical escape, along with practices such as the presence of fire extinguishers to douse the fire. In the factories where the fires we investigated took place, all these norms were violated, without exception. With workers sleeping in the factories, the design of the buildings having just one exit, no safety equipment or other protections, and lack of protocols or provisions to deal with cases of fire, these factories were running unabashedly in contravention to the labour law regulations. For instance, at [the shoe factory fire in Narela](#) on 19.02.2019, the building had only one working entry/exit. When the Fire Department got a call at 3:00 am, it was reported that fifteen workers were sleeping in the basement of the factory. The use of the basement as a residential space is prohibited under the [Rules](#) by the Department of Delhi Fire Services. Similarly, in Bawana, a

worker reported to the [press](#) that they were not provided with even basic safety equipment like masks.

Consistent contravention of the law undoubtedly points fingers at the absence of inspection at the factories where the fires/blasts occurred. While inspection is prima facie a statutory requirement under [Section 3, Delhi Fire Prevention and Safety Act](#), important safeguards like the frequency of visits and incidents which warrant an inspection are not mentioned in the law. The nominated authority may only do so ‘if necessary to ensure the safety of one’s life and property’, the necessity of which is highlighted only after the damage is done and lives are lost. Such notice to the authority can only be made by the worker, who is usually too vulnerable and insecure in their economic status to risk their status of employability and register the notice. Moreover, the qualification of a ‘competent person’—as is legally mandated for the inspection of buildings, premises, etc.—is very loosely defined. The Chief Inspector recognizes any person as competent within such an area on meeting some basic criteria, such as being physically fit and under sixty-two years of age. This criteria is also open to being ‘relaxed’ upon the judgement of solely one individual, the Chief Inspector.

## Fire Safety Norms

Based on our investigations and reportage in the media, it appears that most of these units where the incidents of fire/blasts have taken place, were guilty of not having approvals from the MCD, DSIIDC, the companies providing electricity, or even duly registered Factory Licence from the Labour Department. And yet, these units, including those in one or the other of

Delhi's 'authorised' industrial areas, were able to continue to function year after year (see Chapter 3 for a discussion). In every instance of major or minor fires reported in the media, including the ones investigated by us, it is stated that these units did not have clearance from the Fire Department. In almost all instances the factory owners were tenants in the premises where the incidents took place.

These violations by the factory owners appear in consonance with their illegal labour practices and their repeated everyday violations of a range of labour laws and denial of workers' rights. This was true of each of the factories whether or not they were located in authorised areas. With the exception of the Mundka factory which had a largely female workforce at all the other sites, workers appeared to be living in the factory spaces, whether or not the unit was located in the authorised industrial areas. Authorities in the Labour Department appeared to be aware of this, as did most workers we met in Bawana and Narela. The running argument seems to be that single male migrant workers—who constituted a significant share of the workforce—apparently preferred this practice as it saved them the cost of renting a place in the city. The fact that the workers did not even get the minimum wage, let alone a living wage, was the more likely reason why the workers tried to stay on the premises and save as much money as possible. In the context of these highly fire-prone factory sites, it also meant that they remained constantly vulnerable. The death of one worker, Bablu Mahto, in the Narela factory fire of 2019 we investigated is a case in point (see Annexure 1). He was sleeping in the basement of the factory when the fire broke out and died consequently. The [incident](#) of factory fire that took place on 8 June 2024 in a food processing unit in Narela, which led to the deaths of three workers

and injuries to six others, involved a similar case of the factory running on the ground floor and workers living above that floor. The incident reported at 3:35 am occurred due to a gas leak leading to a boiler bursting while the workers worked on the night shift.

## Aftermath of Factory Fires: Prosecution and Compensation

In all the cases of factory fires/blasts that PUDR investigated, and in the other incidents reported in the press, the lives of several workers violently came to an end, or were devastated by these fires and blasts. Yet, the compulsion of earning a livelihood meant that workers normalised the devastation caused by fires. Those who were injured, but survived, have struggled to get compensation as have surviving family members of workers who lost their lives in these incidents. While it has been a struggle for all of them, their experiences have been varied in this regard. In the Mundka incident, families of most of the deceased workers received compensation only after significant efforts on their part. According to the workers' families, less than a quarter of the workers had ESI/PF benefits, and few of those who died or were injured were covered under these safeguards or provisions. Eventually, as compensation under the Employees Compensation Act and the Chief Minister's and Prime Minister's grants to the families of the deceased came through, the kind of problems Meera Devi—mother of a deceased worker during the Mundka incident in 2022—faced in accessing the compensation, due to lack of identity documents as they were in her husband's name, were among the issues that other victims' families also faced—see Chapter 4.

Furthermore, our fact finding investigations revealed how the injured workers' struggle to 'prove' their injuries, months after the incident occurred, and when their injuries had started healing. This was necessary for establishing their eligibility for compensation under the Employee's Compensation Act. Many of the injured could not get compensation though they lost many days of work, dealt with the physical problems and pain caused by factory fires apart from the trauma of the experience. The need to move on and find other work meant that many could not adequately pursue their case for compensation, because they could not get leave from other work that they had to take up after the fire incidents.

In other cases, such as the Bawana incident of 2023 that we investigated, the deceased workers and their families could not access compensation under the Employees Compensation Act by approaching the Labour Commissioner, even though they were eligible because the police failed to file the Employee's Accident Report (EAR), a requirement for the Joint Labour Commissioner to begin the proceedings to grant compensation. The police took over six months to file the report. The injured in this particular case could likewise apply to the Joint Labour Commissioner for compensation only after the filing of the EAR by the police. The process of accessing compensation for the injured in this case only started in September 2024 almost a year after the incident. In the Basai Darapur 2019 incident too, no compensation was given even to the family of the deceased workers for months afterwards.

Criminal prosecution of the owners of the factories has taken place in all the cases. All of the owners are charged under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which deals with culpable homicide not amounting to murder.



Thus, in the Mundka 2022 incident, police had arrested Manish Lakra, the owner of the commercial building. A case under IPC Section 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide) and Section 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy) in addition to Section 304 IPC was lodged against him, his wife Sunita, and his mother Sushila Lakra, along with the owners of the company, Varun Goyal and Harish Goyal, who were also arrested. Lakra, Varun, and Harish were granted default bail by the Delhi High Court in 2023 on grounds of failure to file the chargesheet, which was filed on time in August 2022. In the Bawana incident of 2023 that PUDR investigated, the owner was arrested under Section 304 of the IPC in addition to other relatively minor bailable charges such as Section 283 (obstruction in a public way), Section 337 (causing hurt by acting rashly, negligently), and Section 427 (mischief that causes damage of at least Rs. 50). The owner of the factory got bail from the High Court on 15 May 2024. He denied his responsibility for the explosion—that he ordered them to do the work as alleged by workers in the FIR—and blamed the scrap supplier, the supervisor Chand Khan, and the dead and injured workers for the incident.

Workers in these areas report that most of the factories have been able to restart operations. This can be seen in the case of the Narela fire of 2019 or the Mundka incident of 2022, among others. Some units in fact re-started work at the same site, while others were known to have relocated to other parts of Delhi-NCR. Arrest and prosecution of owners/partners and even the payment of compensation to workers do not seem to be working as deterrents against the practices that lead to repeated factory fires. The power balance on the ground between owners and workers, the ability of factory owners to access efficient legal help, the nature of police investigations and their inability

or unwillingness to secure evidence to sustain the one or two grave charges in the FIRs, and the impossibility of workers intervening in the cases given their precarious situation, all contribute towards ensuring that criminal prosecution in such cases seems to not act a deterrent. The State has been paying special compensation to workers in some cases (with a large number of casualties, or in the limelight for some other reason), as in the Mundka case. Workers can occasionally access compensation under the ESI scheme (where they are registered by owners under it) and more commonly under the Employee's Compensation Act, only after considerable efforts on their part. The financial burden of compensation in most of these incidents is not borne by the owners.

## CHAPTER 3

# BYPASSED BY LAW: FIRE SAFETY IN DELHI AND WORKERS' LIVES

After each incident of factory fire in Delhi, one of the standard statements media reports include is that the factory where the incident took place did not have a No-Objection-Certificate (NOC) from the Fire Department. The PUDR team decided to investigate this issue of the ever-absent NOC from the Fire Department and examined the fire safety and other laws that govern Delhi's industries.

### **Fire Prevention and Fire Safety in Delhi – The Legal Framework**

Initially, fire safety and fire control in Delhi was governed by The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957. As the city grew and changed significantly by the 1980s, The Delhi Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Act was passed in 1986 (DFPFS). The Rules for this Act were passed in 1987, and subsequently in 2007, the DFPFS Act was updated and the Delhi Fire Service Act, 2007 came into effect. The Rules for this were framed and passed in 2010. It is this Act of 2007 and Rules of 2010, in addition to the Unified Building Bye Laws of Delhi 2016 and the National Building Code of India—under Part 4, 'Fire and Life Safety'—that govern the work of fire safety

and prevention of fires including factory fires. Under the present laws in Delhi, industrial buildings/units have to take clearance and need regulations on fire safety if their total covered area is 250 square metres or more, including all floors. All factories that have this kind of floor area have to have two exits and with proper distance between these exits.

Fire safety and prevention is dependent on inter-agency cooperation. These include the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the electricity company—Tata Power DDL in case of Bawana, Narela, Mundka, etc. for instance—and in the case of the authorised industrial areas, the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Cooperation (DSIIDC). Plans for buildings, areas, etc., have to be uploaded online with these agencies and if their area exceeds 250 square metres, owners of such factories need to seek clearance from the Fire Department. Strictly legally speaking, factories with an area below 250 square metres do not require their approval—[Chapter V Section 27 \(9\) of Delhi Fire Service Act Rules of 2010](#). Factory units that occupy 250 square metres or more area are believed to be high risk while those that occupy less area overall considered low or moderate risk. Apart from area, the nature of activities carried out by industrial units i.e., all activities classified as hazardous, involving hazardous materials, etc., are considered high risk and such units would need clearance from the Fire Department, regardless of the size of the plot or building. Fire Department officials hold that such units are not permitted within the area limits of Delhi.

As previously mentioned in this report, the highest proportion of plots in authorised industrial areas were below 250 square meters. Most of the owners are thus exempt from fire safety clearance from the Fire Department. Factories

that are in nonconforming areas are not recognised in any case. Therefore, our findings show that fire prevention in Delhi's factories, including in 'authorised' industrial areas, is nobody's responsibility. The peculiarity of [Delhi's Fire Service Act and Rules](#) thus is that the role of the Fire Department is limited to response and not prevention.

## 'Tenant-owners': Legal Loopholes, Illegal Practices

Our findings and all media reports reveal that, as discussed, most factories where the fires have occurred and **in fact, most factories in authorised industrial areas, are run by 'owners' who are tenants, in a situation where, according to the DSIIDC, tenancy is illegal.** Yet, this is a well-known and glaring illegality that all authorities are fully aware of, and about which nothing much is done. After a major fire in Bawana in 2018, there was a fair amount of reportage on this practice—of renting or selling original plots—including about [a deceased plot-owner diligently paying taxes, electricity and water bills](#) and maintenance costs of the factory, as the plot had been changing hands from one tenant to another, without any checks. Initially as these industrial areas began to be developed in the late 1990s, as mentioned, the DSIIDC was responsible for allotment of the plots in some of the key authorised industrial areas and granting leases for the same. The plots in areas like Bawana were granted to the original allottees on leasehold with leases ranging from thirty to ninety-nine years. Over the years, many plot owners 'sold' these plots—who in turn 'sold' them to others—while the original owner remained the legal owner. The original owner is the one who would have also got the licence to operate a particular kind of factory in the plot, drawing a certain amount of electrical power, employing a certain

number of persons, etc. However, commonly, the reality on the ground is completely at odds with what is sanctioned and legal. Most factories in these industrial areas do not have their name written outside the premises owing to the fact that ‘owners’ are effectively illegal tenants, as media reports have pointed out earlier and as we found in our survey. Our investigations and media reports also show that there are several instances of multiple factories running inside the same building without valid licences. In some cases we learnt that multiple factories were working under a single licence, possibly that of the original owner. Our findings of the Narela fire revealed that the *chappal* factory operated from the basement, and different ‘*maliks*’ were running other kinds of factories at the higher floors, which were all rented to different people.

In 2018, following some publicity about these tenancies in Bawana, [the DSIIDC issued show cause notices in August 2018](#) to ‘11000 industrial units’ in Bawana for violation of lease conditions. Not much came of it since the practice continued unhindered. Those who run factories in the area have been demanding that the plots be converted to freehold and they be allowed to rent and sell legally. In March of 2024, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi approved the conversion of industrial plots—allotted by the DSIIDC under the Relocation Scheme 1998—from leasehold to freehold, transferring the title or ownership to those running the factories. This policy is supposed to become effective by 31 March 2025. Whether this is effectively completed, and whether the practice of illegal tenancies will come to an end, remains to be seen.

Meanwhile this illegality, of ownership of the sites of these factories, worsens the already difficult conditions of workers who labour in the factories. Such

tenant 'owners' could be running a factory manufacturing totally different goods, drawing totally different electrical loads, requiring totally different kinds of fire safety mechanisms, provisions, etc., than those approved for the originally sanctioned factory at that site. Fires and accidents are practically designed to occur under these circumstances. Since the factories operate most often without licences, workers do not have any insurance or protections such as ESI, and are not even officially accounted for or acknowledged.

## **Multiple Agencies, No Inspections, No Accountability**

After a plot is allotted by the DSIIDC in the authorised industrial area, the factory owner has to secure approvals and clearances from numerous different agencies. As mentioned earlier, the licence to run a factory has to be sought from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the electrical load and connection verified from the electricity company and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has to certify that the industrial processes carried out would not lead to pollution. Each of these need to be periodically renewed. Those factories that employ ten or more workers, and use power, need to get a licence under The Factories Act, 1948. This is issued in Delhi by the Deputy Director of Factories, and the occupier of a factory has to apply under the Delhi Factories Rules, 1950. These factories registered under Factories Act need to indicate their compliance on account of safety measures, workers welfare, working conditions and hours, annual leave, wages, health benefits, etc. The process is supervised by the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health under the Government of Delhi.

When owners do not have licences, none of these regulations apply, and workers' safety is a major casualty across these 'authorised' industrial areas. However, even when factories are run by legal owners and have a licence from the MCD for instance, they may not have clearances from the multiple agencies that have jurisdiction over the factories and those who own and work in them. The existence of these multiple authorities with little coordination between them has meant that regulating factory owners and their practices and premises is well-nigh impossible, even if there had been the will to do so. This issue of different agencies needing to give clearance could potentially be a check on factory owners, and ensure that they abide by norms, including regulations for ensuring workers' safety and prevention of factory fires among others.

**The key issue is that there is no mechanism to check or inspect them to see whether these norms, the regulations that factories are required to abide by as per law, that authorised industrial areas are supposed to follow, are being implemented or not.** This includes building norms, such as those regarding the kinds of processes, etc., as well as those pertaining to workers' health and safety, wages, leave, etc.

The DSIIDC's commitment to fulfil the dreams of industrial entrepreneurs reflects the overall governmental policy emphasis on 'Ease of Doing Business' since 2015–2016. The [Business Reform Action Plans](#) introduced from 2016 onwards have included measures like granting easy clearances, self/online certification without physical on-site inspection, among other leeways, and they clearly work in favour of the industrialists, and further deteriorate the working conditions, all in the interest of business. Thus, even if the tenancies of factory owners are legalised—as they are demanding—and the Lieutenant



Governor has agreed, as discussed earlier, the complete absence of any mechanism of inspection of the factory or working conditions—either by the MCD, or the Labour Department or any of the other authorities involved in the running of the units—makes the situation significantly worse for workers.

The [Fire Prevention and Fire Safety Act, 2005](#) (Section 3) provides for a nominated authority to enter and inspect the building or premises “where inspection appears necessary for ascertaining the adequacy or contravention of fire prevention and fire safety measures.” It goes on to say that this can be done when it “appears to be expedient and necessary to do so in order to ensure safety of life and property.” The question, then, becomes: how will the nominated authority know that an inspection is needed in a factory?

With no other provision in place to necessitate a timely inspection of the factories, there is no instruction to ascertain when the nominated authority should do so. Effectively, this means that the inspection is performed only in cases of a complaint made to the authority about violations of safety norms and irregularities in compliances.

Numerous units in the authorised areas—like the Bawana unit where a blast occurred in September 2023 which we investigated—employ less than ten workers, possibly deliberately, so that they stay under the requirements of the Factories Acts. Workers are usually vulnerable migrants employed by contractors, living inside the factories in many instances. Even if they have been able to form unions, factory based unions are often crushed, and no strong area-wise unions have been active in a sustained way over the last few years. In the case of small units with vulnerable and unorganised labour, like the Bawana incident of 2023 or the Mundka fire of 2022 we investigated, workers are not in a position to register complaints against owners.

Therefore, there is little chance, even when, say, hazardous work is undertaken in a factory and workers are hesitant to do it, or their working conditions are very difficult or exploitative, that workers will be able to complain, demand and ensure that the factories they work in are inspected. And if inspections take place for some reason, the power difference between workers and owners is far too great. Owners are able to deceive or influence inspectors, and workers' rights continue to be blatantly violated. Workers from an illegal jeans factory, whom we met in the course of our investigation in the Narela incident of 2019, reported for instance, that on the rare occasions that factory inspectors visited to investigate a complaint, owners simply paid them off. In the case of this unit on one occasion, the manufacturer locked the gate from outside and claimed that the unit was not operational, all the while work was going on inside.

These continue to remain routine practices in Delhi's authorised industrial areas. This situation means that if a fire breaks out, it is extremely difficult to fix accountability and ensure that the unsafe conditions of work that form the context of the fires are curbed and remedied. In the absence of any effective provision for extensive and thorough fire safety inspections, or inspections by the labour department to check if occupational safety norms are being followed, high risk work continues to take place in Delhi's authorised industrial areas until an accident or blast occurs. And then, while the particular unit affected may be shut down for some days, the units might reopen in another area and continue to work under equally difficult conditions. Under the new Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC), yet to be legally implemented but effectively and practically being followed, the post of the Labour Inspector was to be modified to 'Labour Inspector cum Facilitator' ensuring 'Ease of Doing

Business' and facilitating industrialists and factory owners. Under the Business Reform Action Plans currently being implemented, such as the overall emphasis on 'Single window approvals' to factory owners, the facilitation for grant of licences and approvals, provision for self-certification in many instances in lieu of inspection, inspections only in limited instances, or when there are complaints, all indicate that the focus of State agencies is on gaining the trust of factory owners.

This officially mandated absence of inspections of real conditions in the industrial areas on the ground, amounts to a lack of accountability of factory owners and various State agencies. It ensures that there would be no method to check if factories are complying with the laws of the land. This has fatal and devastating implications for workers who continue to lose lives and/or livelihoods because of repeated factory fires, the occurrence of which under these circumstances becomes entirely predictable and not accidental.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Factory fires in their aftermath illuminate aspects of the lives of the lakhs of workers who labour in Delhi's factories, bringing to the public eye momentarily and partially, their conditions of work and everyday lives. These flickering glimpses allow us to understand the sheer precarity of their everyday lives. We learnt in the course of our investigations about workers like nineteen year old Nisha, who died in the fire that broke out on 13 May 2022 in the factory at Mundka in west Delhi. Nisha had been working in the factory for nearly two years at that time. Nisha's body was one of the 'unknown' charred bodies, finally identified one month and four days after the fire, after matching her DNA with that of her mother.

Nisha, Jashoda, Ranju, and several other workers who died or were injured in the fire, lived in a locality referred to as 'Gaddha Colony', part of an area ironically referred to as 'Bhagya Vihar' not very far from the factory. Largely unauthorised, the locality is low-lying, frequently gets waterlogged, and has no sewerage. Nisha's house was a tiny shack which she, her six siblings and parents shared. Nisha had studied in school till the ninth standard, and we learnt that she had desperately wanted to study further but had to leave school to join work in this factory due to the family's financial hardships becoming worse during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Nisha's mother, Meera Devi, used to depend on Nisha's income for survival, and her husband, Nisha's father, was a plumber. We learnt from neighbours and others that he is

temperamental and an alcoholic, often violent and beats up Meera Devi, and did/does not contribute towards running the house. Like the families of most others deceased in the Mundka fire, Nisha's family too was granted an ex-gratia compensation of Rs. 12 lakhs, where the State Government and Central Government compensated Rs. 10 lakhs and Rs. 2 lakhs respectively. Meera Devi, who has no bank account and is illiterate, was unable to deal with officials and prepare documentation, etc., and was only able to do the paperwork needed for getting the ex-gratia compensation because of the help she got from relatives of other victims. Her husband was the sole bank account holder in the family, and the amount was given to him. They had, till 2024, far spent four to five lakhs rupees on repairing and building their house, and Meera Devi is, so far, managing to access the remaining money, using it for everyday survival, taking care of her children and herself. She is unable to take up factory work herself because one of her daughters is disabled and she has to take care of her, apart from being unwell and malnourished herself. She, like many other women in her lane, assembles plastic flowers at home, earning merely three rupees for putting together 144 flowers at the time of the fire. She manages to earn about Rs. 1000–1500 a month this way.

Like many of the young women who worked in the factory, Nisha used to do the job of packing and labelling boxes of phones, routers, etc., primarily working with others in small teams. When she had joined the work, Nisha initially got Rs. 6500 a month and at the time of her death she was earning Rs. 7500 per month. She used to keep Rs. 1000 for herself and give the rest to her mother to run the house. The factory had no fire safety mechanisms even though it kept dangerous chemicals on its premises used for screen-printing labels and boxes, etc., apart from other fire hazards. There had been a previous fire there, where no one had got injured. About a month prior to the fire, the

owners appointed two men in supervisory positions to ensure that workers were goaded on to greater speed and productivity in work. These men instituted a female guard at the gate who checked them and confiscated the workers' phones before they entered. This was the reason why Nisha and other workers could not call their families when the fire began.

Other workers like Komal—names of survivors changed upon request—in the Mundka factory, spoke of the trauma of losing team members alongside whom they worked. Sweety, one of the deceased workers, used to live on the same lane as Komal, a younger girl. The two used to go to work together and Sweety used to look out for Komal at work. Komal has not been able to overcome the trauma of the fire and go back to work in a factory. Even a year after a fire in Bawana, the memory of it terrifies Raju—name changed—who was badly injured in a blast at his factory. Komal had also struggled to get compensation from the Labour Court for her injuries, because of which she had difficulty working for some months. The judge asked her to give proof of injuries several months after the incident, when the scars were beginning to fade. She could not get compensation. It is in these details of the extreme vulnerability of the workers, their everyday struggles to survive—prior to, during and after these fires—that the causes for recurrence of factory fires in Delhi have to be located.

What emerges from this investigation of factory fires in Delhi, in industrial areas regarded as authorised, or scheduled to be 'authorised'/'redeveloped', is the following set of interlocked features which are worth citing together here. Firstly, the majority of the plots on which industrial units are running are small, under 250 square metres, and thereby do not require clearance or NOC from the Fire Department. This means that there is no possibility of ensuring

for preventive measures given the mismatch between the law and reality. Secondly, a large number of the factories employ under ten workers and do not qualify as 'Factories' under The Factories Act. Thus, numerous workers who are working in Delhi, even in its authorised industrial areas, are excluded from the protection of labour laws available for factory workers and fire safety laws. Thirdly, most of the units are run by unit-owners who are tenants. In authorised industrial areas where a large number of fires occur annually, tenancy is illegal since plots were originally allotted on leasehold, and cannot be given out on rent to tenants. Most units where fires occur have no licences or permissions to operate—whether it is from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Chief Inspector of Factories, Labour Department, Electricity authorities, or the Delhi Pollution Control Committee. Fourthly, given that the units themselves are illegal in these ways, their industrial and labour practices do not adhere to the norms of just wages and working conditions. Ranging from not giving minimum wages to allow workers to live and work with dignity, or maintaining basic fire protection or safety standards, hours of work or leave, ESI/PF, etc., the owners of these factories in authorised areas are guilty of flagrant violations of multiple labour and related laws. Fifthly, this is possible because of the complete absence of any real physical inspections by labour related officials and other authorities that check whether or not labour, safety and legal conditions are being met. No 'suo-moto' inspections take place in Delhi's industrial areas. Only after industrial accidents take place and written complaints are made by workers, or others about labour violations and violations of fire safety norms, can inspections now take place. Sixthly, given the nature and history of the workforce and labour control, it has been difficult for labour unions to make headway or create stable support and mobilise workers in these industrial

areas. The absence of active unions is important since unions—potentially—are bodies that could have, on behalf of workers, filed such complaints and demanded that fair and regular labour inspections take place, and norms and workers’ safety and rights are protected. The difficulties faced by workers in forming unions, even more in recent years, has been the decisive factor that has ensured workers’ continued vulnerability.

These aspects—unions facing difficulties, labour inspections not working to ensure factory owners’ accountability, and the issue of labour rights being eroded—have been the ground reality for workers in Delhi for nearly two decades. With the new Labour Codes and the Ease of Doing Business policy—in operation since 2016—these erosions of workers’ rights are validated in law. These laws and policies now disempower workers and abet capital while delegitimizing unions. Though yet to be officially notified, these Codes have grim implications for workers facing potential fire hazard in Delhi’s factories. As PUDR has argued in its [report](#) on the Labour Codes, even prior to notifications, most of the clauses of the Labour Codes have been passed by executive orders and gazette notifications, and are therefore, for all intents and purposes, being practically implemented on the ground. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code 2020 (OSHC Code 2020) states that only a unit with twenty or more workers where electric power is used, and forty workers or more where no electric power is used—from the previous limit of twenty workers for non-power driven factories—would need to register and comply with norms of safety, health and working conditions. The very definition of a ‘factory’ established in law is casually overturned here, with implications for workers everywhere. In Delhi, as seen in the report, units already have even less than ten workers. Not only



will these units and workers continue to remain unprotected, many more units and workers will remain excluded, having no safeguards against risky and harsh working conditions. Seemingly small changes in words in the new Codes—for instance the renaming of the Labour Inspector as the ‘Labour Inspector-cum-Facilitator’—denote a major conceptual change and the official is now expected to advise employers. It legalizes the common existing harmful practice of labour inspectors acting at the behest of powerful companies rather than safeguarding workers’ rights. These changes indicate how executive policies and the Labour Codes are closely aligned and oriented towards ensuring that business and capital thrive, at the cost of workers if necessary. Provisions for factories to ‘self-certify’ their compliance with such protective legislation that still exists on the ground for workers are also the norm under existing Ease of Doing Business policies as in the Labour Code, with no check on what actually exists on the ground. These practices leave labour completely unprotected, and threaten workers’ right to life.

The OSHWC Code 2020 also leaves it to the discretion of state governments to define health and safety standards. It also allows them discretion in notifying hours and periods of work, enabling the extension at will of the eight hour working day norm. It defines offences and punishment for owners but deals with them in a way that is favourable to them. It reduces owners’ liability overall (see pp. 27–31 of our [The Anti-Labour Codes](#) report). It also dangerously provides for the worker to be held responsible for industrial accidents. In defining offences of owners it reduces the accountability of the principal employers in the case of contract workers and reduces the scope for workers to seek legal redress for the violation of their rights to occupational safety and proper working conditions. The OSHWC Code 2020 thus ensures

that workers are legally deprived with State sanction of the few protections that might still exist on the ground.

While there is talk of inclusive growth, the lives of this section of migrant workers in factories in the capital, who contribute to economic growth in different ways, are completely invisibilized, their deaths in factory fires normalised, without any real penalties on not only the factory owners but also State authorities. Delhi's factory workers are rendered vulnerable as this report has shown, kept in a deliberately created liminal space between legality and illegality, where they are left completely without recourse. Their deaths and injuries in repeated factory fires in Delhi appear to be pre-scripted and un-accidental under the circumstances.

In the light of the above, PUDR demands that executive authorities and judiciary in Delhi turn their attention towards the repeatedly occurring factory fires, and be held accountable for their systemic neglect of the issue and of workers' fundamental rights, primarily of which includes safety at their workplaces. We reiterate our demand that the new Labour Codes and Ease of Doing Business Policy, including the numerous other executive orders that are now operational in pursuit of this, which violate the constitutional rights of workers and need to be withdrawn, substantially because of their fatal consequences for the workers. The International Labour Organisation's Conventions on Occupational Safety and Health must be ratified by India. The International Labour Organisation standards on this must be met, in Delhi and other cities, to ensure that workers are treated fairly and justly, as citizens and human beings, and not as collateral damage in the name of promoting business.

# ANNEXURE 1

Details of a few incidents of factory fires/explosions or blasts in Delhi investigated by PUDR between 2019 and 2024.

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## **Incident 1: Explosion in factory, Basai Darapur, Sudarshan Park, 3 January 2019**

Fan-blade manufacturing and painting factory

### **The Incident and its Context**

On 3 January 2019, around 8:30–8:45 pm, a 150 yard—approximately 125 square metres—two-storey building in Basai Darapur, Sudarshan Park, Moti Nagar, in west Delhi collapsed due an explosion of LPG cylinder/gas compressor on the first floor of a fan factory that ran inside the building. Several persons died or were gravely injured in the incident.

The PUDR team investigated the incident at the time and found that this particular factory was operating in the area in a rented building for more than six years. It was operating illegally inside the old, large urban village in Delhi Basai Darapur. The ground floor of the ‘factory’ was used for manufacturing fan blades and the first floor for paint coating the blades, which required a furnace. There were around fourteen to seventeen workers employed at the factory, including two women. On the day of the explosion, the workers were told to do overtime and complete the painting and packaging work in order to complete an order. At around 8:30–8:45 pm, the furnace used for paint coating got overheated, which resulted in a huge explosion. Before the workers

could move out, the structure of the building collapsed. The building shared a common wall with a scrap store/godown where five to six workers were staying at the time of the accident. Locals informed the police and other agencies, who with the help of the rescue team, evacuated the workers. Seven persons died in the incident. Three of them were the workers in the factory, one was a child of one of the workers who had come with their parent, and two were workers staying in the adjoining scrap store/godown. Those who died included Ramphal (45 years) and Mangre (55 years), in the scrap store/godown, and Rajesh (40 years), his son Anshu (6 years), Ajay Bahadur (19 years), Ajay Kumar (22 years) and Sanjay Prasad (18 years). Additionally, around ten to eleven people, including the owner of the factory building, got injured. We were able to find out the names of the following among them – Ankit Gupta, one of the factory owners, Manju Devi, Mohd. Alam (Munna), Gangesh, Surender, Ashok, Rakesh, who was staying at the scrap store/godown, and Bacchai Patel. The injured were admitted to Acharya Bhikshu, Safdarjung and Ram Manohar Lohia hospitals. According to one of the survivors of the accident, the workers used to do different kinds of work related to making the fan blades and painting and packing them, and were paid around Rs. 6500 for eight hours of work, with an additional four hours of overtime work daily.

The illegal factory was owned by two cousins, Ankit Gupta and Sumit Gupta, residents of Rohtak, Haryana. While some reports stated that the South Delhi Municipal Corporation had served a closure notice to the owner a month before and sealing activity was to be carried out a week after the accident, PUDR found that this was contradicted by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Delhi West). Other residents in the area had also apparently formally complained about this building several times. Some of the residents and

workers family also informed that the owners of the factory were in favor of shifting the factory to Bawana, but the owner of the building assured him that his factory would not be sealed by the authorities because he had political clout. After the accident, when our team met the owner of the building, he claimed to have no idea about the operations inside the building.

The village of Basai Darapur was popularly known as the site of Asia's biggest fan market. At the time of the incident, most of the factories operating in the area were illegal and marked for sealing. PUDR met the secretary of the Fan Manufacturing Merchant Association in the area who informed us that there used to be more than one thousand factories in the locality but only two hundred odd were left at the time of the incident in early 2019.

### **Aftermath**

An FIR was registered against the owner and sometime later, the process of granting compensation began. The owner of the scrap store told the PUDR team that no compensation was given to the families of the scrap workers who had died in the explosion, nor did any officials come to meet them. Similarly, Kamlesh Devi, mother of deceased Ajay Bahadur, one of the workers in the fan factory said that in the immediate aftermath of the incident when she needed help, she got no support or help from the government or authorities. She was only called to identify her son at the police station. She earned a little money by working as a domestic worker, while her husband, Budh Bahadur, Ajay's father, was a rickshaw puller and did not give her any money to run the house. Ajay had studied till the eighth standard and then started working. He had been working in this factory for seven to eight months when the accident occurred. He was the main earner in the family, working twelve hours a day and giving his mother about Rs. 7000–8000 a month.

Injured worker Munna's (Mohd. Alam) mother Saira Banu said that he had joined work in the factory only three or four days before the incident. While Munna's mother worked as a domestic worker, his father was relatively older and worked as a plumber. Munna had sustained injuries on his leg, chin and face and had been admitted in Acharya Bhikshu Hospital for treatment. He had been referred to Safdarjung Hospital but the referral paper got lost, accidentally. Both parents of thirteen year old Pooja (Soni), a student of eight standard at the time used to work in the factory, and her little brother used to go to the factory which was near where they stayed. Her parents would usually come back by about 9:00 or 10:00 pm, so when they did not return by then on 3 January, she went to see what had happened. Her father Rajesh and brother Anshu had died in the accident and her mother, Manju Devi, was injured and had to undergo surgery and treatment in hospital. All workers who died and were injured in this incident were migrant workers from Ghonda, Rae Bareli and other districts in Uttar Pradesh.

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## Incident 2: Fire in factory, Sector 4, Bawana, 15 February 2019<sup>2</sup>

Nail-polish manufacturing factory

### **The Incident and its Context**

On 15 February 2019, early in the morning, at about 2:45 am as [reported](#), there was an explosion following which a fire broke out in a nail-polish unit in Bawana on plot no. E-236 Sector 4, DSIIDC, Bawana. Nine workers were injured. There were no deaths. In the course of PUDR's preliminary fact

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<sup>2</sup> A version was previously published in Annexure 4 of the PUDR's report *The Anti-Labour Codes: Capitalizing a Disaster* (August 2021).

finding at that time, we found that there was an explosion on the second floor of the factory, possibly caused by a short circuit. Our team visited the site about three weeks after the incident, and found that the strength of the blast was such that the side wall had been completely destroyed, the walls were black with soot, fans twisted completely out of shape, huge cracks running down the remaining inside walls, chunks of concrete hanging precariously from the ceiling ready to crash down. On one side of the building, the blast had resulted in large canisters from the factory being tossed on the ground some distance from the factory and shards from hundreds of shattered nail polish bottles which were scattered around.

### **Aftermath**

The injured workers sustained 20–40% chemical burns. Their Medico-Legal Certificates also recorded other injuries such as abrasions and puncture wounds on workers' faces, neck, hands and feet. In at least one case, a worker suffered a cut on his head. One of them suffered a leg fracture. Redness of eyes, and in one case inability to open the right eye were recorded. According to workers from nearby factories, the nine workers were rescued in an extremely timely manner by workers in the adjoining factory, who pulled them up over a common wall when the fire broke out. All the injured were young male migrant workers in their twenties and the only address on the Medico-Legal Certificates (MLC) of all nine was that of the factory. They were both working and living on the premises. Two of the nine also named the owner, Mr. Honey, as a 'relative'/'friend'. Three of those injured—Ravi (25 years), Pappu (23 years) and Chhotu (20 years)—were brothers. One of them had come to Delhi and managed to get the others there. They were grateful to the owner for giving work to all of them. The FIR was based on

one of their statements. We learnt that the three brothers were back at the factory soon after the incident.

Given their dependence on the owner, it was not surprising that the complainant changed his statement before the Magistrate, allowing the factory owner to get bail, even though the police had charged him under the Explosives Act, allegedly on the ground that the chemicals in the factory were not identified, which meant that getting bail was difficult. The owner claimed that he was running the factory for his aunt and that she was the principal employer. According to the Police, the Investigating Officer in the case, the ambiguity in the Bawana industrial area—between factory-owner, lease-holder, and operator/producer—was frequently used by actual factory owners to get bail. The policemen indicated that their work, of identifying and prosecuting those guilty, was made significantly more difficult in case of industrial fires and accidents because of this sort of confusing and inadequate documentation regarding ownership/control of the factory and plot.

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### **Incident 3: Fire in a factory, Narela, 19 February 2019**

Plastic and rubber slippers manufacturing factory

#### **The Incident and its Context**

A fire broke out in the early hours of 19 February 2019, in F-1763, Narela Industrial Area. Plastic and rubber chappals were manufactured in the unit which was owned by Ankur Goyal. The PUDR team investigated the incident and found that the immediate cause of the fire was allegedly sparking in an



exhaust fan. Work was going on even at the time of the accident. Plastic, rubber, chemicals—all highly inflammable substances—were present inside the factory. The scale of the fire was such that it took almost nine hours to extinguish after the fire brigade reached at 2:40 am. Bablu Mahto, a 28 year old migrant worker from Bihar who was sleeping in the basement, was killed in the fire and eight other workers were injured. Bablu’s body was discovered buried under the debris only by the afternoon of 20 February when the rubble was cleared. Casualties would have been higher but for the fact that the factory had a guard, a *chowkidar*, who opened the main factory gate in time and all other workers were able to escape.

At 350 square metres, F-1763 was one of the larger plots in Narela, in the authorised industrial area. The building was three storeyed and Ankur Goyal’s *chappal* factory ran in the basement. Other factories with different owners operate on the ground, first and second floors. The building had just one gate which served as both entrance and exit, with a smaller door set into it. Workers used the hatch/smaller door, and the large gate was opened only when raw materials and chemicals were brought in, or the finished products loaded. Not only was there no second exit there in the building, but no other basic provisions for fire safety were present in the factory.

### **Aftermath**

FIR No. 89/19 was registered at the Police Station of Narela Industrial Area under Sections 285 and 304A IPC—negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible material, causing death. The punishment for Section 285 IPC is imprisonment for six months and fine of Rs. 1000. Section 304—causing death by negligence not amounting to culpable homicide—has a maximum punishment of two years and a fine. In the course of PUDR’s investigation

into the incident, we found that less than a month after the incident, production had restarted in the factory. Our team found that the owner was present on the premises, and had evidently got bail. The chowkidar's family was still there at the site and seeing his children speaking to our team from the threshold of the hatch door, the owner instructed that it be shut. We have not been able to get an update on whether Bablu's family received any compensation, or the precise status of criminal prosecution. It is unclear whether requisite safety norms and measures were adopted inside the factory after the incident. Yet, production in the factory resumed within a few weeks.

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#### **Incident 4: Fire in a factory, Mundka, 13 May 2022**

Wi-fi routers, CCTVs and surveillance equipment  
assembling and packing unit

##### **The Incident and its Context**

A fire broke out in a factory in a Lal Dora area in a factory involved in assembling, packing and making CCTV, routers and other surveillance equipment, chargers, phones etc. in Mundka in West Delhi, on 13 May 2022, at about 4:00 pm. Twenty-seven workers died in the fire. Twenty-one of them were women. While the owner of the building used to stay on the top-floor, the other three floors of the building were rented out to brothers Harish Goel and Varun Goel, who were operating two electrical equipment manufacturing companies—Cofe Impex Private Limited and I-Clear Technologies Private Limited—from this location. This incident was extensively reported in the media. In the course of the PUDR investigation into the aftermath of the incident, we independently confirmed and could add to facts reported in the

media at the time. On the day of the fire, the factory owners had gathered their team of about 150–170 employees for a motivational meeting on the second floor of the building, when the fire broke out. Workers reported that since the floors of the rooms in the factory were also used to store CCTV cameras, wires, wifi routers and other electrical equipment, as well as equipment and chemicals for screen printing labels, etc., all of which were combustible materials, the fire, originating possibly from electrical short-circuiting, would have spread very fast. There was only one exit and one staircase. Several workers jumped out of the building from the second floor and some were rescued once the fire engines arrived shortly thereafter. The building owner, Manish Lakra, who also lived in the building, escaped via the terrace with his family and locked the door after them, so that workers could not exit from there either.

The workers laboured from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm at the unit, and in the weeks before the fire, had to routinely work overtime after that. They had leave on Sundays, and no other paid holiday. They had no fixed lunch break and worked in teams, taking the lunch break when their work allowed. The factory provided them with tea twice a day. While ‘helpers’ got a salary of Rs. 6500 a month, most workers got Rs. 7500 per month approximately as monthly salary, with overtime they could earn about Rs. 8500 per month. A few more experienced workers who did technical work, like screen-printing labels, etc., or those in supervisory roles got paid some more. About thirty to forty of the workers were men, forming a majority of the workers. Those in formal supervisory roles were all men.

About a month before the incident, the owners brought in two new supervisors and new security guards. A strict and aggressive regimen was

introduced, in place of more paternalistic supervisors earlier, supposedly to increase workers' productivity. This involved measures like not permitting workers to carry mobile phones inside the factory, the devices had to be deposited with a guard while entering. They were physically checked to ensure this protocol and only one senior woman worker, who died in the fire, was permitted to carry a phone inside the building. Therefore, when the fire broke out, only one worker had her phone with her. Most workers were migrants who came from different regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and lived in localities around the factory.

The building owner had no licence to run the factory from the premises from the municipality. The factory too did not have a valid licence. It was reported to have had a licence till 2016, after which it was cancelled. Importantly, the illegal three storeyed factory was located prominently close to the main road, and the factory owners paid a hefty rent to the building owner. Besides being an illegal factory, it also did not have any ventilation or fire safety equipment. As mentioned earlier, it only had one entrance/exit, located at the back of the building. The building was over an area of about 500 square yards, and had four floors and a basement.

### **Aftermath**

The initial wait for families for identification of bodies of the victims, charred beyond recognition, continued in some cases for over a month. On 8,9 and 23 June 2022, three, ten, and six bodies were identified respectively and handed over to their families. The authorities took another week to hand over the DNA test results. Despite these delays, there was an instance of wrongful identification of a body. As survivors informed the PUDR team and the press confirmed, the family of one of the deceased workers, Ranju Devi, was told

that they were being handed over her body, which they duly cremated. Later, they were told that Sweety's body had been wrongly handed over to them and Ranju's body was still in the mortuary, and subsequently given to her family. Sweety's family could not even perform her last rites.

The factory owners and the building owner were arrested after the incident and an FIR No. 462/22 was lodged at the Mundka Police Station. The factory owners were charged under Sections 308, 302, 120B, 340 of the IPC, and the owners of the building and factory were arrested after a while. As one of the deceased workers' relatives informed us, only about forty-seven of the workers had ESI benefits. About seven or eight of the deceased workers were among those who had ESI, and were able to, with effort, access the process of securing compensation. For most of the workers, compensation came by way of the arbitrarily announced 'ex-gratia' payment by elected representatives. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced through a tweet that through the the Prime Minister National Relief Fund (PMNRF), compensation of two lakh rupees will be given to the kin of the deceased, and fifty thousand rupees to the injured. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had announced ten lakh rupees would be given to the kin of the deceased, and fifty thousand rupees to the injured. The Delhi government also ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident.

Our findings indicate that since the promise of compensation was announced through tweets, it meant that families of the deceased had to struggle very hard to secure it. Some of the families struggled to put together money for even carrying out the last rites of the victims, where no support was forthcoming. To actually get the compensation, families of the deceased, themselves workers, had to engage with bewildering forms and bureaucratic

requirements, and lose many working days in the process. They were required to make repeated rounds of Tis Hazari Courts, Mundka Police Station, and Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, for some or the other document or query. They were called by the authorities repeatedly and then sent back to come another day. They were told to call and make appointments but calls to the authorities were not answered. If by some stroke of luck, they could get through to the authorities on the phone, they were told to be patient.

### **Injured Workers' Plight**

A large number of workers had been injured, and suffered other kinds of damage as a consequence of the fire, including post-traumatic stress. Even as the families of victims tried to secure help for the survivors through the ESI and the Employees Compensation Act, the question of compensation for the injured workers remained a fraught one. As time went by, their injuries healed, and workers were compelled to go back to working to survive, it became difficult to 'prove' their injuries. Some injuries that workers got in the process of escaping or rescue—e.g., from falling from a height from the crane, from jumping out of the building to save themselves—were not considered eligible for compensation, even though they spent a lot of money in securing treatment. We have details of Pragya and Vinita (names changed), workers who had injuries from falling. Some injured workers found it difficult to travel to the government hospital for treatment and many had to get back to work without full treatment as they needed to work, somehow, to survive. As deceased workers were being brought in into the government run Sanjay Gandhi Hospital at the time of the incident, many injured were not able to get adequate medical help at the time of the incident, and had to turn to private hospitals. This proof was not officially acceptable for State compensation.

The trauma of those who survived the fire, including those who escaped injuries, was not regarded as eligible for compensation either. Additionally, in incidents like this, if injured workers are able to actually secure compensation after applying to the Labour Commissioner, their conditions of employment and the fact that they got below minimum wages would impact the calculation of compensation under the Employees Compensation Act. We also have the accounts of some other injured workers who were not able to get any compensation.

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## **Incident 5: Explosion/Blast in a Factory, Sector 3, Bawana, 20 September 2023**

Plastic pellets/granules from scrap

### **The Incident and its Context**

A fire resulting from a blast took place at a factory that manufactured plastic granules/pellets—from scrap plastic materials—located in O-Block, Plot No. 58, in Sector 3, Bawana Industrial Area. The police were informed at about 4:30 pm, and fire engines came to douse the fire. Two workers—Harbir (30 years) and Ashok (45 years)—died immediately and one other, Bhanu (23 years), died in the hospital. Three other workers, Rajeev (28 years), Raju (40 years), and the sole woman worker in the unit, Gita (40 years), had serious injuries. PUDR investigated the incident and its aftermath.

The factory used to grind scrap plastic materials into granules/pellets. As recorded in the FIR, there was a grinding machine in the basement of the building and a pellet manufacturing machine on the higher floor. Scrap

plastic including plastic cigarette lighters were brought in and the machine ground these into tiny pieces. In the consignment of scrap lighters that were brought to the factory shortly before the accident to be crushed, there were many lighters with inflammable gas, in liquid form, still inside them. Workers expressed their apprehension on phone to the factory owner Manoj Kumar that this could lead to a fire or an accident any day. They had been given no safety equipment either. The owner ordered them to proceed with the work regardless. All the partly filled lighters with inflammable liquid—Liquefied Petroleum Gas according to the Labour Inspector's report we were able to access—were accumulated in the basement and workers also expressed fear about it, but the factory owner told them to mind their own business and do their own work. On 20 September 2023, at about 4:30 pm, workers there heard a huge blast inside the factory while the scrap cigarette lighters were being fed into the grinding machine. The FIR records and cleaning staff of Bawana Infra involved in cleaning up after the blast reported to the PUDR team how the material from the factory and body tissues of the workers who died got splattered on the wall of the factory across the road indicating the magnitude of the blast. Pieces of cigarette lighters were scattered till about 45–50 feet away, and a car parked on the road was damaged. The door and wall of the factory was also shattered. The police and fire brigade arrived and started the rescue process. Apart from the two deceased, one worker, Bhanu, was severely injured and three others were also injured. All were taken to the Maharishi Valmiki Hospital. Bhanu died there, while the others were treated for burns and other injuries.

All the three deceased workers were migrants from the same village in Etah District, Uttar Pradesh. Two of the injured workers belonged to Nangloi, while the other was a migrant worker from a village in Agra district. All the



male workers stayed in the factory premises. While Raju had worked for around two to three years in the unit, all others had worked for relatively shorter durations, ranging from a few days to a few months. Workers laboured for ten hours a day and had one holiday in the week. They learnt the work on the shopfloor, and were paid about Rs. 15000 a month once they had learnt the work. The factory was built on a smaller plot of about 100–150 square metres, and the owner Manoj Kumar was a tenant. He was running the factory without valid licences and permissions/No Objection Certificates from the Factory and Labour Departments, Fire Department, ESI Department, DPCC, etc.

### **Aftermath**

The owner was arrested under FIR No. 0766 dated 21.09.2023 P.S. Bawana—Sections 285, 337, 304 and 427 IPC—and sent to jail on 5 October 2023. He [got bail](#) on 15 May 2024 from the Delhi High Court. The owner’s argument was that he was not aware that lighters were being crushed, and that the responsibility lay with the ‘raw material’ or scrap supplier, Chand Khan, who, according to the owner, was also supervising the process of production at the time of the accident. This runs counter to the workers statement that the owner was well aware of the risk involved and despite this ordered them to continue working. The Labour Inspector’s report which PUDR had access to, was given after the inspection carried out on 4 December 2023. It held that the unit did not qualify as a factory under The Factories Act, 1948 as it had six workers. It held that ‘proper ventilation facilities’ were not provided in the premises and that ‘skilled manpower’ with knowledge of processing hazardous substances, chemicals, and gases was not appointed. The Joint Labour Commissioner—Labour Court, Ashok Vihar—issued several summons to

the police demanding that they submit the mandatory Employee Accident Report needed to begin the process of giving compensation under the Employees Compensation Act for the deceased and injured. In clear violation of law, where Delhi High Court order of 28 October 2015 requires that EAR should be submitted within thirty days of the incident, the police submitted the same over six months after the incident. The families of the deceased victims have filed claims and these cases are being heard. The injured workers have struggled to recover, and find work that they could do despite the lingering problems they have from the injuries sustained in the fire. They have begun the process of accessing compensation through a lawyer.

## ANNEXURE 2

List of factory fires in Delhi reported in media 2022–2024.<sup>3</sup>

| Sl. No. | Date             | Place                        | Casualties             | Nature of Unit/Site                             | Sources   |
|---------|------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 1       | February 2, 2022 | Ghuman Hera                  | No casualties reported | Factory   | <a href="https://telanganatoday.com/fire-breaks-out-in-oil-tank-at-southwest-delhi-factory">https://telanganatoday.com/fire-breaks-out-in-oil-tank-at-southwest-delhi-factory</a>   |
| 2       | March 2, 2022    | Narela Industrial Area       | No casualties reported | Factory   | <a href="https://www.india.com/hindi-news/delhi/fire-broke-out-at-factory-in-narela-area-earlier-delhi-5265539/">https://www.india.com/hindi-news/delhi/fire-broke-out-at-factory-in-narela-area-earlier-delhi-5265539/</a>                                     |
| 3       | April 9, 2022    | Anand Parbat Industrial Area | 9 injured              | Factory for electrical components manufacturing | <a href="https://www.newsclick.in/Todays-News-Round-Up-April-09-2022">https://www.newsclick.in/Todays-News-Round-Up-April-09-2022</a>   |
| 4       | April 9, 2022    | Azad market                  | 5 injured              | Multiple buildings                              | <a href="https://www.newsclick.in/Todays-News-Round-Up-April-09-2022">https://www.newsclick.in/Todays-News-Round-Up-April-09-2022</a>   |
| 5       | April 24, 2022   | Pratap Nagar                 | No casualties reported | Railway godown                                  | <a href="https://www.india.com/news/india/fire-breaks-out-railway-godown-near-pratap-nagar-metro-station-delhi-video-5355906/">https://www.india.com/news/india/fire-breaks-out-railway-godown-near-pratap-nagar-metro-station-delhi-video-5355906/</a>         |
| 6       | April 24, 2022   | Narela Industrial Area       | No casualties reported | Plastic factory                                 | <a href="https://www.india.com/news/delhi/major-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-factory-in-delhis-narela-no-casualty-reported-5355851/">https://www.india.com/news/delhi/major-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-factory-in-delhis-narela-no-casualty-reported-5355851/</a> |

<sup>3</sup> We have attempted to archive all the source links, along with other links in this report, on the Wayback Machine of the Internet Archive (<https://web.archive.org/>).

|    |              |                        |                        |                                       |  |
|----|--------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 7  | May 13, 2022 | Mundka                 | 27 dead, 12 injured    | CCTV and Router manufacturing factory | <a href="https://www.independent.co.uk/news/police-ap-new-delhi-indian-arendra-modi-b2078929.html">https://www.independent.co.uk/news/police-ap-new-delhi-indian-arendra-modi-b2078929.html</a><br><a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61445600">https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-61445600</a><br><a href="https://www.industrialunion.org/deadly-fire-in-electronics-factory-in-india">https://www.industrialunion.org/deadly-fire-in-electronics-factory-in-india</a>                              |
| 8  | May 14, 2022 | Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Plastic granulation factory           | <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/fire-at-delhi-s-narela-industrial-area-none-injured-101652557091047.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/fire-at-delhi-s-narela-industrial-area-none-injured-101652557091047.html</a>  |
| 9  | May 16, 2022 | Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Footwear factory                      | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-sandal-factory-delhi-narela-tender-1950218-2022-05-16">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-sandal-factory-delhi-narela-tender-1950218-2022-05-16</a>  |
| 10 | May 19, 2022 | Mustafabad             | 1 dead, 6 injured      | Electric goods factory                | <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/1-dead-six-injured-in-factory-fire-in-east-delhi-s-new-mustafabad-101652984886293.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/1-dead-six-injured-in-factory-fire-in-east-delhi-s-new-mustafabad-101652984886293.html</a><br><a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/May/20/blaze-at-two-units-none-had-noc-2455783.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/May/20/blaze-at-two-units-none-had-noc-2455783.html</a> |
| 11 | May 19, 2022 | Bawana Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Cello tape factory (No NOC obtained)  | <a href="https://zeenews.india.com/india/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-delhis-bawana-17-tenders-on-site-2465148.html">https://zeenews.india.com/india/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-delhis-bawana-17-tenders-on-site-2465148.html</a><br><a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/May/20/blaze-at-two-units-none-had-noc-2455783.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2022/May/20/blaze-at-two-units-none-had-noc-2455783.html</a>   |
| 12 | May 22, 2022 | Bhalaswa               | No casualties reported | Furniture factory                     | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/fire-breaks-out-at-furniture-godown-in-delhis-bhalaswa-299776">https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/fire-breaks-out-at-furniture-godown-in-delhis-bhalaswa-299776</a>  |

|    |                    |                            |                                 |                                      |   |
|----|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 13 | June 6, 2022       | Inderlok                   | No casualties reported          | Cardboard, Toys, and Clothes factory | <a href="https://hindi.news18.com/news/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-incident-in-cardboard-factory-of-inderlok-area-toys-and-clothes-factories-also-came-in-the-grip-4301881.html">https://hindi.news18.com/news/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-incident-in-cardboard-factory-of-inderlok-area-toys-and-clothes-factories-also-came-in-the-grip-4301881.html</a>   |
| 14 | June 23, 2022      | Rohini                     | 1 dead, 8 injured               | Shoe manufacturing cum Storage unit  | <a href="https://www.siasat.com/one-dead-8-rescued-as-fire-breaks-out-at-building-in-delhis-rohini-2355764/">https://www.siasat.com/one-dead-8-rescued-as-fire-breaks-out-at-building-in-delhis-rohini-2355764/</a>   |
| 15 | June 26, 2022      | Samaypur Badli             | No information about casualties | Plastic Granules Godown              | <a href="https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/india/fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-godown-near-rohini.html">https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/india/fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-godown-near-rohini.html</a>   |
| 16 | June 29, 2022      | Mangolpuri                 | No casualties reported          | Factory                              | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-mangolpuri-no-casualties-reported-fire-tenders-latest-news-updates-today-national-capital-2022-06-29-788153">https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-mangolpuri-no-casualties-reported-fire-tenders-latest-news-updates-today-national-capital-2022-06-29-788153</a> |
| 17 | July 25, 2022      | Ranhola                    | No casualties reported          | Toy Shop Godown                      | <a href="https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-godown-in-outer-delhi-8051077/">https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-godown-in-outer-delhi-8051077/</a>   |
| 18 | August 24, 2022    | Patparganj Industrial Area | 1 dead                          | Factory                              | <a href="https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-patparganj-industrial-area-factory-worker-killed-people-rescue-ntc-1524446-2022-08-24">https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-patparganj-industrial-area-factory-worker-killed-people-rescue-ntc-1524446-2022-08-24</a>   |
| 19 | August 31, 2022    | Inderlok                   | No casualties reported          | Toy factory                          | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-fire-in-toy-factory-delhi-fire-service-inderlok-area-1994616-2022-08-31">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-fire-in-toy-factory-delhi-fire-service-inderlok-area-1994616-2022-08-31</a>   |
| 20 | September 4, 2022  | Rajouri Garden             | No casualties reported          | Godown factory                       | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/fire-breaks-out-godown-delhi-rajouri-garden-1996187-2022-09-04">https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/fire-breaks-out-godown-delhi-rajouri-garden-1996187-2022-09-04</a>   |
| 21 | September 22, 2022 | Narela Industrial Area     | No casualties reported          | Footwear Manufacturing Factory       | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-delhi-shoe-factory/articleshow/94380893.cms?utm_source=content">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-delhi-shoe-factory/articleshow/94380893.cms?utm_source=content</a>   |

|    |                    |                               |                          |   |   |
|----|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
|    |                    |                               |                          |   | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-narela-industrial-area-fire-break-out-in-footwear-manufacturing-unit-2003317-2022-09-22">tofinterest&amp;utm_medium=text&amp;utm_campaign=cppst</a><br><a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-narela-industrial-area-fire-break-out-in-footwear-manufacturing-unit-2003317-2022-09-22">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-narela-industrial-area-fire-break-out-in-footwear-manufacturing-unit-2003317-2022-09-22</a> |
| 22 | September 23, 2022 | Narela Industrial Area        | No casualties reported   | Footwear Manufacturing Factory                  | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/massive-fire-shoe-factory-delhi-narela-industrial-area-2003726-2022-09-23">https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/massive-fire-shoe-factory-delhi-narela-industrial-area-2003726-2022-09-23</a>   |
| 23 | October 24, 2022   | Raghubar Pura-2, Gandhi Nagar | No casualties reported   | Garment factory                                 | <a href="https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-east-delhi-garment-factory-8227908/">https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-east-delhi-garment-factory-8227908/</a><br><a href="https://theprint.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-gandhinagar-factory-rescue-op-underway/1181118/">https://theprint.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-gandhinagar-factory-rescue-op-underway/1181118/</a>  |
| 24 | November 1, 2022   | Narela Industrial Area        | 2 dead, 18 or 20 injured | Footwear factory                                | <a href="https://ndtv.in/india/delhi-fire-breakout-in-narela-industrial-area-12-fire-brigade-on-the-spot-4378469">https://ndtv.in/india/delhi-fire-breakout-in-narela-industrial-area-12-fire-brigade-on-the-spot-4378469</a>   |
| 25 | November 5, 2022   | Narela Industrial Area        | No casualties reported   | Plastic slipper and shoes manufacturing factory | <a href="https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-factory-in-delhi/articleshow/95314313.cms?from=mdr">https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-factory-in-delhi/articleshow/95314313.cms?from=mdr</a>   |
| 26 | November 17, 2022  | Madipur                       | 1 dead                   | Shoe factory                                    | <a href="https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/fire-in-a-shoe-factory-delhi-madipur-one-person-died-agra-fire-tenders-ntc-1577982-2022-11-18">https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/fire-in-a-shoe-factory-delhi-madipur-one-person-died-agra-fire-tenders-ntc-1577982-2022-11-18</a>   |
| 27 | November 28, 2022  | Lawrence Road Industrial Area | No casualties reported   | Footwear manufacturing factory                  | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-major-fire-at-footwear-manufacturing-factory-in-lawrence-road-fire-tenders-rushed-to-site">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-major-fire-at-footwear-manufacturing-factory-in-lawrence-road-fire-tenders-rushed-to-site</a>   |

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| 28 | December 6, 2022  | Jhilmil Industrial Area      | No casualties reported | Factory                   | <a href="https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-news-live-updates-air-quality-weather-traffic-8306172/">https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-news-live-updates-air-quality-weather-traffic-8306172/</a>   |
| 29 | January 1, 2023   | Mundka                       | No casualties reported | Factory                   | <a href="https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/third-fire-in-less-than-a-year-at-mundka-where-27-were-killed-in-may-8383902/">https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/third-fire-in-less-than-a-year-at-mundka-where-27-were-killed-in-may-8383902/</a>   |
| 30 | August 1, 2023    | Okhla Phase-1                | No casualties reported | Factory                   | <a href="https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/okhla-fire-call-fire-brigade-okhla-phase-1-delhi-ntc-1611203-2023-01-08">https://www.aajtak.in/india/delhi/story/okhla-fire-call-fire-brigade-okhla-phase-1-delhi-ntc-1611203-2023-01-08</a>   |
| 31 | December 2, 2023  | Rama Industrial Area         | No casualties reported | Factory                   | <a href="https://news.abplive.com/delhi-ncr/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-in-karampura-factory-27-fire-tenders-douse-blaze-1581773">https://news.abplive.com/delhi-ncr/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-in-karampura-factory-27-fire-tenders-douse-blaze-1581773</a>   |
| 32 | February 26, 2023 | Bawana Industrial Area       | No casualties reported | Oil factory               | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-fire-breaks-out-oil-factory-bawana-industrial-area-2335516-2023-02-16">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-news-fire-breaks-out-oil-factory-bawana-industrial-area-2335516-2023-02-16</a>   |
| 33 | February 17, 2023 | Keshav Puram Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Godown (factory basement) | <a href="https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-fire-break-out-in-basement-of-factory-located-on-lawrence-road-delhi-20-fire-tenders-reached-spot-23332216.html">https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-fire-break-out-in-basement-of-factory-located-on-lawrence-road-delhi-20-fire-tenders-reached-spot-23332216.html</a> |
| 34 | March 1, 2023     | Roshanara Road               | No casualties reported | Logistics company factory | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-on-roshanara-road-in-north-delhi/articleshow/98329266.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-on-roshanara-road-in-north-delhi/articleshow/98329266.cms</a>   |
| 35 | March 16, 2023    | Wazirpur Industrial Area     | No casualties reported | Metal and plastic factory | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/city/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-factory-at-wazirpur-industrial-area/videoshow/98697137.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/city/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-factory-at-wazirpur-industrial-area/videoshow/98697137.cms</a>   |
| 36 | March 17, 2023    | Siraspur Industrial Area     | No casualties reported | Mattress factory          | <a href="https://theprint.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-mattress-factory-in-siraspur-industrial-area-no-injuries-reported/1450121/">https://theprint.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-mattress-factory-in-siraspur-industrial-area-no-injuries-reported/1450121/</a>   |

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| 37 | March 28, 2023 | Badarpur                 | No casualties reported | Warehouse                      | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/fire-at-warehouse-in-delhis-badarpur-3898723">https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/fire-at-warehouse-in-delhis-badarpur-3898723</a>   |
| 38 | March 21, 2023 | Wazirpur Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Cosmetic and solvent factory   | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-in-factory-delhi-wazirpur-industrial-area-2353829-2023-03-31">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-in-factory-delhi-wazirpur-industrial-area-2353829-2023-03-31</a>   |
| 39 | April 6, 2023  | Samalkha Kapas Hera      | No casualties reported | Godown                         | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-in-godown-at-sonia-gandhi-camp-in-samalkha-kapas-hera-area-fire-department-casualties-latest-updates-2023-04-07-861152">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-in-godown-at-sonia-gandhi-camp-in-samalkha-kapas-hera-area-fire-department-casualties-latest-updates-2023-04-07-861152</a>   |
| 40 | April 7, 2023  | Gandhi Nagar             | No casualties reported | Cloth godown                   | <a href="https://theguardian.com/fire-breaks-out-in-cloth-godown-at-delhis-gandhi-nagar-market/">https://theguardian.com/fire-breaks-out-in-cloth-godown-at-delhis-gandhi-nagar-market/</a>   |
| 41 | April 8, 2023  | Tikri Kalan              | No casualties reported | Plastic godown                 | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/major-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-godown-in-delhi-3930747">https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/major-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-godown-in-delhi-3930747</a>   |
| 42 | April 12, 2023 | Narela Industrial Area   | No casualties reported | Godown                         | <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-narela-no-casualties-so-far-101681283561576.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-narela-no-casualties-so-far-101681283561576.html</a>   |
| 43 | May 6, 2023    | Chand Bagh               | 1 dead                 | Laptop cell factory            | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-laptop-cell-factory-in-northeast-delhi-chand-bagh-30-year-old-woman-dies/articleshow/100048065.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-laptop-cell-factory-in-northeast-delhi-chand-bagh-30-year-old-woman-dies/articleshow/100048065.cms</a> |
| 44 | May 15, 2023   | Bawana Industrial Area   | 1 injured              | Footwear manufacturing factory | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/major-fire-at-footwear-manufacturing-factory-in-outer-delhis-bawana-area-2379548-2023-05-15">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/major-fire-at-footwear-manufacturing-factory-in-outer-delhis-bawana-area-2379548-2023-05-15</a>   |
| 45 | May 16, 2023   | Narela Industrial Area   | No casualties reported | Shoe factory                   | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-delhis-narela-injured-dead-2380156-2023-05-16">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-delhis-narela-injured-dead-2380156-2023-05-16</a>   |
| 46 | May 16, 2023   | Bawana Industrial Area   | 1 injured              | Shoe factory                   | <a href="https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncra-fire-broke-out-i">https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncra-fire-broke-out-i</a>   |



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|    |               |                        |                        |                         | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-delhi-pooth-khurd-no-casualties-reported-2382877-2023-05-23">n-a-shoe-slipper-factory-in-bawana-a-industrial-area-23413854.html</a>  |
| 47 | May 22, 2023  | Pooth Khurd            | No casualties reported | Plastic waste godown    | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-delhi-pooth-khurd-no-casualties-reported-2382877-2023-05-23">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-delhi-pooth-khurd-no-casualties-reported-2382877-2023-05-23</a>   |
| 48 | June 11, 2023 | Kirti Nagar            | No casualties reported | Factory/ furniture shop | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-delhi-factory-kirti-nagar-furniture-shop-2391720-2023-06-11">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/fire-delhi-factory-kirti-nagar-furniture-shop-2391720-2023-06-11</a>   |
| 49 | June 10, 2023 | Kamla Market           | No casualties reported | Godown                  | <a href="https://www.thehansindia.com/news/national/fire-breaks-out-at-n-tpcs-kaniha-plant-870713">https://www.thehansindia.com/news/national/fire-breaks-out-at-n-tpcs-kaniha-plant-870713</a>   |
| 50 | June 11, 2023 | Bawana Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Factory                 | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-a-factory-in-bawana-industrial-area-no-casualties-reported/video/show/100961892.cms#0">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-a-factory-in-bawana-industrial-area-no-casualties-reported/video/show/100961892.cms#0</a>     |
| 51 | July 1, 2023  | Gokalpuri              | 2 dead, 2 injured      | Plastic factory         | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-cylinder-blast-gokalpuri-plastic-factory-two-dead-police-investigation-latest-updates-2023-07-01-878828">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-cylinder-blast-gokalpuri-plastic-factory-two-dead-police-investigation-latest-updates-2023-07-01-878828</a>                                   |
| 52 | July 8, 2023  | Gulabi Bagh            | No casualties reported | Godown                  | <a href="https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=167541&amp;headline=Fire-breaks-out-in-godown-in-New-Delhi%27s-Gulabi-Bagh">https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=167541&amp;headline=Fire-breaks-out-in-godown-in-New-Delhi%27s-Gulabi-Bagh</a>   |
| 53 | July 24, 2023 | Libaspur               | 4 injured              | Factory                 | <a href="https://news.abplive.com/delhi-news/4-injured-in-fire-in-delhi-factory-fire-tenders-rush-delhi-fire-incident-1618041">https://news.abplive.com/delhi-news/4-injured-in-fire-in-delhi-factory-fire-tenders-rush-delhi-fire-incident-1618041</a>   |
| 54 | July 28, 2023 | Jaunapur               | No casualties reported | Tent godown             | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-at-tent-godown-jaunapur-death-toll-injury-fire-tenders-reported-latest-updates-delhi-fire-service-2023-07-28-883594">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-at-tent-godown-jaunapur-death-toll-injury-fire-tenders-reported-latest-updates-delhi-fire-service-2023-07-28-883594</a> |
| 55 | July 28, 2023 | Mayapuri               | No casualties reported | Factory/ godown         | <a href="https://www.india.com/news/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-delhi-mayapuri-2391720-2023-07-28-883594">https://www.india.com/news/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-godown-in-delhi-mayapuri-2391720-2023-07-28-883594</a>   |

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|    |                    |                        |                        |                            | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/udyog-nagar-fire-video-massive-blaze-at-delhi-shoe-factory-13-fire-engines-on-spot-4252547">own-in-delhis-mayapuri-16-fire-ten-nders-rush-to-spot-6193860/</a>   |
| 56 | July 30, 2023      | Udyog Nagar            | No casualties reported | Shoe manufacturing factory | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/udyog-nagar-fire-video-massive-blaze-at-delhi-shoe-factory-13-fire-engines-on-spot-4252547">https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/udyog-nagar-fire-video-massive-blaze-at-delhi-shoe-factory-13-fire-engines-on-spot-4252547</a>   |
| 57 | August 9, 2023     | Gandhi Nagar           | No casualties reported | Plywood factory/shop       | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/toi-original/devastating-fire-engulfs-plywood-shop-in-delhis-gandhi-nagar-market-extensive-damage-reported/videoshow/102554668.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/toi-original/devastating-fire-engulfs-plywood-shop-in-delhis-gandhi-nagar-market-extensive-damage-reported/videoshow/102554668.cms</a> |
| 58 | August 13, 2023    | Alipur                 | No casualties reported | Chemical factory godown    | <a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2023/Aug/14/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-chemical-factory-in-delhis-alipur-no-casualty-reported-2605139.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/delhi/2023/Aug/14/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-chemical-factory-in-delhis-alipur-no-casualty-reported-2605139.html</a>   |
| 59 | August 15, 2023    | Kirti Nagar            | No casualties reported | Furniture godown           | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-furniture-godown-in-kirti-nagar-no-casualty/articleshow/102743668.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-furniture-godown-in-kirti-nagar-no-casualty/articleshow/102743668.cms</a>   |
| 60 | August 15, 2023    | Bawana Industrial Area | 6 injured              | Chemical factory           | <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fire-breaks-out-in-chemical-factory-in-delhis-bawana-area-101692254525295.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/fire-breaks-out-in-chemical-factory-in-delhis-bawana-area-101692254525295.html</a>   |
| 61 | August 19, 2023    | South Extension Part-1 | No casualties reported | Clothing warehouse         | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-garment-warehouse-in-south-delhi/articleshow/102859677.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-garment-warehouse-in-south-delhi/articleshow/102859677.cms</a>   |
| 62 | August 21, 2023    | Nilothi Village        | No casualties reported | Factory                    | <a href="https://www.news18.com/india/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-factory-nilothi-village-rescue-operation-underway-8544105.html">https://www.news18.com/india/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-factory-nilothi-village-rescue-operation-underway-8544105.html</a>   |
| 63 | September 14, 2023 | Karol Bagh             | No casualties reported | Garment warehouse          | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-garment-warehouse-in-delhis-karol-bagh-none-injured/articleshow/103648053.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-in-garment-warehouse-in-delhis-karol-bagh-none-injured/articleshow/103648053.cms</a>   |

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| 64 | September 20, 2023 | Bawana Industrial Area           | 2 dead, 4 or 6 injured | Plastic factory          | <a href="https://theprint.in/india/delhi-2-killed-in-plastic-factory-blast-in-bawana/1770685/">https://theprint.in/india/delhi-2-killed-in-plastic-factory-blast-in-bawana/1770685/</a>   |
| 65 | October 7, 2023    | Kamruddin Nagar                  | No casualties reported | Plastic godown           | <a href="https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-plastic-godown-kamruddin-nagar-casualties-8972101/">https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/fire-plastic-godown-kamruddin-nagar-casualties-8972101/</a>   |
| 66 | October 9, 2023    | Anand Vihar                      | No casualties reported | Factory                  | <a href="https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhi-anand-vihar-4375371">https://www.ndtv.com/delhi-news/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhi-anand-vihar-4375371</a>   |
| 67 | October 12, 2023   | Peeragarhi                       | No casualties reported | Shoe factory             | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/video/video-massive-fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-in-delhi-peeragarhi-2447858-2023-10-12">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/video/video-massive-fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-in-delhi-peeragarhi-2447858-2023-10-12</a>   |
| 68 | October 13, 2023   | Udyog Nagar                      | No casualties reported | Plastic factory          | <a href="https://www.livehindustan.com/ncr/story-delhi-fire-in-plastic-dan-a-factory-udyog-nagar-fire-tenders-at-site-8842022.html">https://www.livehindustan.com/ncr/story-delhi-fire-in-plastic-dan-a-factory-udyog-nagar-fire-tenders-at-site-8842022.html</a>   |
| 69 | October 18, 2023   | Bawana Industrial Area           | No casualties reported | Granule factory          | <a href="https://telanganatoday.com/fire-at-two-granule-factories-in-delhi-no-casualty-reported">https://telanganatoday.com/fire-at-two-granule-factories-in-delhi-no-casualty-reported</a>   |
| 70 | October 19, 2023   | Dilshad Garden                   | 1 dead                 | Mobile godown            | <a href="https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-a-man-died-due-to-shop-fire-incident-in-dilshad-garden-of-delhi-23560329.html">https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-a-man-died-due-to-shop-fire-incident-in-dilshad-garden-of-delhi-23560329.html</a>   |
| 71 | November 4 2023    | Bawana Industrial Area           | 1 injured              | Bangles factory          | <a href="https://english.jagran.com/india/delhi-bawana-fire-news-factory-fire-live-updates-casualties-injuries-damage-report-fire-fighting-operations-delhi-latest-news-10111758">https://english.jagran.com/india/delhi-bawana-fire-news-factory-fire-live-updates-casualties-injuries-damage-report-fire-fighting-operations-delhi-latest-news-10111758</a>                                       |
| 72 | November 9, 2023   | Bhorgarh, Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Plastic factory          | <a href="https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-delhi-massive-fire-break-out-in-a-factory-in-narela-industrial-area-fire-brigade-brought-it-under-control-with-great-effort-23527215.html">https://www.jagran.com/delhi/news-delhi-city-ncr-delhi-massive-fire-break-out-in-a-factory-in-narela-industrial-area-fire-brigade-brought-it-under-control-with-great-effort-23527215.html</a> |
| 73 | November 9, 2023   | Vasant Kunj                      | No casualties reported | Plastic granules factory | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/two-fire-incidents-i">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/two-fire-incidents-i</a>   |

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|----|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
|    |                    |                          |                        |                                  | <a href="https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/fire-in-a-warehouse-and-house-in-delhi-creates-panic-2023November13">n-city-no-casualty/articleshow/103597820.cms</a>  |
| 74 | November 13, 2023  | Sadar Bazar              | No casualties reported | Godown/warehouse                 | <a href="https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/fire-in-a-warehouse-and-house-in-delhi-creates-panic-2023November13">https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/fire-in-a-warehouse-and-house-in-delhi-creates-panic-2023November13</a>   |
| 75 | November 26, 2023  | Mangolpuri               | No casualties reported | Shoe factory                     | <a href="https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-in-mangolpuri20231126114328/">https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-shoe-factory-in-mangolpuri20231126114328/</a>   |
| 76 | December 14, 2023  | Fatehpur Beri            | No casualties reported | Godown                           | <a href="https://www.india.com/hindi-news/news/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-a-warehouse-in-the-fatehpur-beri-delhi-6584337/">https://www.india.com/hindi-news/news/delhi/massive-fire-breaks-out-at-a-warehouse-in-the-fatehpur-beri-delhi-6584337/</a>   |
| 77 | December 17, 2023  | Mayur Vihar Phase-1      | No casualties reported | Paper warehouse                  | <a href="https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-fire-paper-warehouse-fire-engines-blaze-smoke-mayur-vihar-2477001-2023-12-17">https://www.indiatoday.in/cities/delhi/story/delhi-fire-paper-warehouse-fire-engines-blaze-smoke-mayur-vihar-2477001-2023-12-17</a>   |
| 78 | December 24, 2023  | Karawal Nagar            | No casualties reported | Car mat/seat cover Godown        | <a href="https://www.livemint.com/news/india/delhi-news-fire-breaks-out-at-a-godown-in-karawal-nagar-12-fire-tenders-rushed-to-the-spot-11703420512762.html">https://www.livemint.com/news/india/delhi-news-fire-breaks-out-at-a-godown-in-karawal-nagar-12-fire-tenders-rushed-to-the-spot-11703420512762.html</a>   |
| 79 | January 3, 2024    | Bawana Industrial Area   | No casualties reported | Plastic factory                  | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-at-bawana-plastic-factory-no-injuries/articleshow/106528849.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-at-bawana-plastic-factory-no-injuries/articleshow/106528849.cms</a>   |
| 80 | January 9-10, 2024 | Narela Industrial Area   | No casualties reported | Packaging and assembling factory | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-factory-narela-area-watch-video-deaths-injured-fire-tenders-service-dousing-operation-latest-updates-2024-01-09-910971">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-factory-narela-area-watch-video-deaths-injured-fire-tenders-service-dousing-operation-latest-updates-2024-01-09-910971</a> |
| 81 | January 13, 2024   | Bawana Industrial Area   | No casualties reported | Footwear factory                 | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/massive-fire-at-delhi-factory-no-casualties-reported/articleshow/106848610.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/massive-fire-at-delhi-factory-no-casualties-reported/articleshow/106848610.cms</a>   |
| 82 | January 25, 2024   | Wazirpur Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Utensil manufacturing factory    | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/5-rescued-from-fac">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/5-rescued-from-fac</a>   |

|    |                   |                                  |                        |                                     |   |
|----|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
|    |                   |                                  |                        |                                     | <a href="https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/a-fire-broke-out-in-a-warehouse-in-the-kratran-market-area-of-delhi-2024-02-08">tory-fire-in-north-west-delhi/amp_articleshow/107158833.cms</a>  |
| 83 | February 8, 2024  | Mangolpuri                       | No casualties reported | Warehouse                           | <a href="https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/a-fire-broke-out-in-a-warehouse-in-the-kratran-market-area-of-delhi-2024-02-08">https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/a-fire-broke-out-in-a-warehouse-in-the-kratran-market-area-of-delhi-2024-02-08</a>   |
| 84 | February 11, 2024 | Bhorgarh, Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Factory warehouse                   | <a href="https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/fire-breaks-out-in-factory-warehouse-in-bhorgarh-area-of-delhi-2024-02-11">https://www.amarujala.com/delhi-ncr/fire-breaks-out-in-factory-warehouse-in-bhorgarh-area-of-delhi-2024-02-11</a>   |
| 85 | February 11, 2024 | Alipur, Narela                   | No casualties reported | Shoe factory                        | <a href="https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=178955">https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=178955</a>   |
| 86 | February 15, 2024 | Alipur, Narela                   | 11 dead, 4 injured     | Illegal paint manufacturing factory | <a href="https://www.industrialunion.org/india-factory-fire-kills-eleven-people">https://www.industrialunion.org/india-factory-fire-kills-eleven-people</a>   |
| 87 | February 16, 2024 | Mayapuri                         | 2 injured              | Chemical factory                    | <a href="https://www.abplive.com/states/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-mayapuri-fire-news-third-fire-incident-within-24-hours-2-people-injured-ann-2614742">https://www.abplive.com/states/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-mayapuri-fire-news-third-fire-incident-within-24-hours-2-people-injured-ann-2614742</a> |
| 88 | February 25 2024  | Mangolpuri                       | No casualties reported | MCB manufacturing factory           | <a href="https://news.abplive.com/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-mangolpuri-factory-no-casualties-reported-16-fire-tenders-1667465/amp">https://news.abplive.com/delhi-ncr/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-mangolpuri-factory-no-casualties-reported-16-fire-tenders-1667465/amp</a>             |
| 89 | February 26 2024  | Sadar Bazar                      | No casualties reported | Warehouse                           | <a href="https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-warehouse-in-sadar-bazar-area-firefighting-operation-underway">https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-warehouse-in-sadar-bazar-area-firefighting-operation-underway</a>                       |
| 90 | March 24, 2024    | Budhpur, Alipur                  | No casualties reported | Oil godown                          | <a href="https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/major-fire-in-outer-delhi-godown-34-tenders-rushed-2951021">https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/major-fire-in-outer-delhi-godown-34-tenders-rushed-2951021</a>   |
| 91 | March 24, 2024    | Bhorgarh, Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Factory                             | <a href="https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-in-narelas-bhorgarh-industrial-area-no-casualty-reported">https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-in-narelas-bhorgarh-industrial-area-no-casualty-reported</a>                       |

|     |                |                                 |                        |  |   |
|-----|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| 92  | March 31, 2024 | Prahladpur                      | No casualties reported | PVC pipe manufacturing factory           | <a href="https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-prahladpur-no-casualties-2959837">https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-prahladpur-no-casualties-2959837</a>   |
| 93  | April 9, 2024  | Mundka                          | No casualties reported | Plastic granule factory                  | <a href="https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=182372&amp;headline=Fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-Delhi%27s-Mundka-area">https://www.babushahi.com/full-news.php?id=182372&amp;headline=Fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-Delhi%27s-Mundka-area</a>   |
| 94  | April 9, 2024  | Gandhinagar                     | No casualties reported | Factory                                  | <a href="https://www.republicworld.com/india/fire-breaks-out-in-east-delhi-s-gandhi-nagar-market-none-injured">https://www.republicworld.com/india/fire-breaks-out-in-east-delhi-s-gandhi-nagar-market-none-injured</a>   |
| 95  | April 25, 2024 | Jamia Area                      | No casualties reported | Plastic pipe manufacturing factory       | <a href="https://www.timesnownews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-plastic-pipe-manufacturing-factory-in-jamia-area-article-109588894">https://www.timesnownews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-in-plastic-pipe-manufacturing-factory-in-jamia-area-article-109588894</a>                 |
| 96  | May 12, 2024   | Bawana Industrial Area          | 7 injured              | Chemical factory                         | <a href="https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/7-people-injured-in-fire-at-chemical-factory-in-delhi-s-bawana-police-124051300006_1.html">https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/7-people-injured-in-fire-at-chemical-factory-in-delhi-s-bawana-police-124051300006_1.html</a> |
| 97  | May 17, 2024   | Kirti Nagar                     | No casualties reported | Factory                                  | <a href="https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-a-factory-in-kirti-nagar-3-people-evacuated20240517214819/">https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-a-factory-in-kirti-nagar-3-people-evacuated20240517214819/</a>   |
| 98  | June 7, 2024   | Bhorgarh Narela Industrial Area | No casualties reported | Fire safety equipment manufacturing unit | <a href="https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-at-fire-safety-equipment-manufacturing-unit-in-delhis-bhorgarh-none-injured-3056913">https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-at-fire-safety-equipment-manufacturing-unit-in-delhis-bhorgarh-none-injured-3056913</a>           |
| 99  | June 7, 2024   | Narela Industrial Area          | 3 dead, 6 injured      | Moong Dal Drying Factory                 | <a href="https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/three-workers-dead-six-injured-in-fire-in-narela-food-processing-unit/article68265793.ece">https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/three-workers-dead-six-injured-in-fire-in-narela-food-processing-unit/article68265793.ece</a>     |
| 100 | June 16, 2024  | Mundka                          | No casualties reported | LED manufacturing unit                   | <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/mundka-factory-gutted-in-massive-fire-none-hurt-101718562512993.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/mundka-factory-gutted-in-massive-fire-none-hurt-101718562512993.html</a>                                   |

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|-----|--------------------|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| 101 | June 18, 2024      | Raghubar Pura, Shahdara                   | No casualties reported     | Moong dal drying factory                | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-at-shahdara-factory/articleshow/111079813.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/delhi-massive-fire-breaks-out-at-shahdara-factory/articleshow/111079813.cms</a>   |
| 102 | June 18, 2024      | Okhla Phase-2                             | No casualties reported     | Factory                                 | <a href="https://www.dynamiteneews.com/story/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-okhla-phase-2">https://www.dynamiteneews.com/story/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-okhla-phase-2</a>   |
| 103 | July 24, 2024      | Narela Industrial Area                    | No casualties reported     | Plastic granules factory                | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-granules-factory-in-narela-industrial-area-fire-services-tenders-at-spot-dousing-flames-deaths-injured-latest-updates-2024-07-24-943391">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/delhi-fire-breaks-out-at-plastic-granules-factory-in-narela-industrial-area-fire-services-tenders-at-spot-dousing-flames-deaths-injured-latest-updates-2024-07-24-943391</a> |
| 104 | August 12, 2024    | Badli Industrial Area, Outer Delhi        | No casualties reported     | Jeans manufacturing unit                | <a href="https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-jeans-manufacturing-factory-in-outer-delhi-3146754">https://www.deccanherald.com/india/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-jeans-manufacturing-factory-in-outer-delhi-3146754</a>   |
| 105 | September 8, 2024  | Rajiv Ratna Awas, Bakkarwala, Outer Delhi | No casualties reported     | Clothes factory                         | <a href="https://www.thehindu.com/newscities/Delhi/west-delhi-garment-factory-fire/article68617750.ece">https://www.thehindu.com/newscities/Delhi/west-delhi-garment-factory-fire/article68617750.ece</a>   |
| 106 | September 15, 2024 | Lawrence Road Industrial Area             | No casualties reported     | Shoe factory                            | <a href="https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhi-s-lawrence-road-industrial-area-latest-update-2024-09-15-952240">https://www.indiatvnews.com/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhi-s-lawrence-road-industrial-area-latest-update-2024-09-15-952240</a>   |
| 107 | October 13, 2024   | Bawana Industrial Area                    | No casualties reported     | Chemical factory                        | <a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-bawana/articleshow/114184686.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-bawana/articleshow/114184686.cms</a>   |
| 108 | November 1, 2024   | Alipur                                    | 2 workers dead, 18 injured | Footwear Managing and Packaging factory | <a href="https://www.industrialunion.org/two-factory-fires-in-india-in-less-than-a-week">https://www.industrialunion.org/two-factory-fires-in-india-in-less-than-a-week</a>   |
| 109 | November 9, 2024   | Alipur                                    | No casualties reported     | Footwear Managing and Packaging factory | <a href="https://www.industrialunion.org/two-factory-fires-in-india-in-less-than-a-week">https://www.industrialunion.org/two-factory-fires-in-india-in-less-than-a-week</a>   |

|     |                   |                        |                      |         |   |
|-----|-------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------|---|
| 110 | November 13, 2024 | Vikas Nagar            | No details mentioned | Factory | <a href="https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-vikas-nagar-20241113231004/">https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-vikas-nagar-20241113231004/</a> |
| 111 | November 19, 2024 | Bawana Industrial Area | No details mentioned | Factory | <a href="https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-bawana-20241119104115/">https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/fire-breaks-out-at-factory-in-delhis-bawana-20241119104115/</a>           |



# ANNEXURE 3

## Challenges of recovering 'facts' about workers' lives.

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The challenges of uncovering facts about the lives, and the living and working conditions of the workers behind the factory fire death statistics are many. In the case of the Mundka fire in 2022 we investigated, where many of the workers were women, living in the neighbourhoods near the factory with their families, we could find survivors and other workers who could tell us about the deceased workers, and the working conditions that were the context of their deaths. We could even learn about some of the hopes and aspirations of the workers, and learn about their daily struggles. In the case of the vast numbers of migrant workers, many of whom lived inside factories, and were employed through contractors, shifting from one unit to another, it was difficult to gain access to sources about their lives. In some instances, the information in the FIR lodged by the police into the fire was the only limited information source PUDR could access despite efforts. A brief description of the details of one of the workers in one incident would be useful to illustrate one of the major difficulties in investigating factory fires, or workers' lives before their deaths by such fires.

### Harbir

Thirty year old Harbir was a worker who died in the blast on 20 September 2023 in a plastic pellet manufacturing factory in Plot O-58, Sector 3, Bawana

in north-west Delhi. He was one among the three workers who died in that incident. The PUDR team could learn little about his life beyond what is recorded in the FIR (No. 0766, 21/9/23 P.S. Bawana). As noted in the FIR by one of the injured workers, and the main complainant in the incident, the workers had pointed out the fire risk involved in crushing the lighters and of accumulating many of these in one place to the owner, Manoj Kumar Jain. Despite their caution, the owner apparently ordered them to continue with their work and threatened to throw them out if they did not proceed. As a result of this, workers proceeded to run the machine, and an explosion took place at about 4:30 pm on 20 September 2023, exactly as the workers had feared. Harbir was one of the two workers who died on the spot, the other was Ashok, who was 45 years of age. Both their bodies were recorded as being in a ‘mutilated, unconscious and unresponsive state’, and declared ‘brought dead’ at MV Hospital where they were taken. A third worker, Bhanu (23 years) who had suffered extensive injuries and burns on his head, chest and other parts of his body, later succumbed to his injuries. We know from the FIR that Harbir was the son of Anokhe, and his permanent address was in Nagariya village, PS Sawar, Etah, Uttar Pradesh, as were the addresses of the other two deceased workers. With the exception of one woman worker in this incident, all the male workers listed the address of the factory as their current address, and like workers in many units in Bawana, Narela and elsewhere in Delhi, these workers also stayed inside the factory. Other information that we came to know was entirely accidental. Few others in the area were willing to talk, or knew details about working conditions in the factory. Some Bawana Infra workers responsible for cleaning the streets in the area recalled the horror of cleaning the area after the blast with the bodies of the workers literally blown into pieces and flung across the street onto the wall of the

building on the other side of the wide lane and strewn on the lane outside the factory (along with large numbers of plastic lighters that the workers were crushing in the machine before the explosion). The tea seller in the area, and workers of other factories nearby, said that they did not really know the workers who lived inside the factory, nor did they know exactly how many workers there were. We managed to speak to a few survivors, on the phone and in person, nearly one year after the incident. However, after a few initial statements, they clamped down, refusing to talk even about their working conditions or their own biographical histories. This was, we were told indirectly, because they were fearful that sharing any information would impact their chances of getting some compensation. It is possible that they were pressured or legally advised to not share any information. Their palpable fear, stemming from their extreme vulnerability, could be heard in their voices and seen in their demeanour, as they told us that they would not be able to speak.

We pieced together the context of the accident from the information we gleaned from them, and from the official documents. We learnt that the factory where Harbir had worked had seven workers, and while one of them had worked there for two to three years, most workers had worked a few months or weeks, and one had only worked for a few days there when the accident occurred. As the FIR indicates, Harbir, and the two other deceased workers, all belonged to the same village. They had been brought to work at this factory by a contractor from their village. We learnt that the workers in this unit laboured for ten hours a day, six days a week, earning around Rs. 15000 a month. Harbir's family was in the village. We know about the facts of the case from the FIR and from the workers' account – that the blast/explosion took place in the basement of the factory, where there was a

grinder machine in which different kinds of plastic scraps were grounded, and then processed into plastic pellets in another machine kept on the higher floor of the factory. The most recent consignment of plastic scrap which workers had to crush consisted of lighters which still contained some inflammable material in them. As mentioned, the owner commanded the workers to continue to work despite their concerns about this potential hazard. The process of granting compensation has been slow, as discussed in the accounts of the incidents . The families of a few deceased workers, in this incident, have apparently appealed before the Labour Court and put in their own claims for compensation. We hope to keep following up on the case. This report is an effort to remember Harbir and all the other named and nameless workers affected by factory fires, in the hope that they can someday get justice.

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