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<p style="text-align: justify;" />PESHAWAR: Though the number of vehicles running on compressed natural gas (CNG) has drastically increased over the years, commuters, it seems, no longer bother checking the quality of gas cylinders installed in their vehicles.
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<p style="text-align: justify;">This negligence has resulted in gas kits exploding, costing lives and damaging property.</p>

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Around 3.5 million vehicles are run on CNG across the country as it is more economical compared to petrol and diesel.

With a number of passenger vehicles, including school vans, also running on CNG, the lack of maintenance and checks on gas cylinders has endangered the lives of many, including schoolchildren. It has been reported hundreds have been killed as a result of cylinders exploding.

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This has become a public hazard since vehicle owners do not get their cars inspected by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), which says only five percent of vehicles in the city are checked.</p>

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The Peshawar High Court (PHC) stepped in and took notice of the substandard gas cylinders and the increasing blasts, especially after the recent one in Gujrat, Punjab, which killed at least 16 children.</p>

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Although a detailed order with guidelines was issued by the court in 2011 regarding the matter, it went largely unnoticed and the government is yet to take action against low quality gas kits being installed by inexperienced mechanics.</p>

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Due to the negligence, the PHC decided to make it a cognizable offence so that people think twice before installing poor quality gas kits and cylinders.</p>

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PHC Chief Justice Dost Muhammad Khan directed the new Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) government to enact legislation to ensure the safety of passengers and schoolchildren travelling on CNG buses. The court maintained all stakeholders must ensure CNG kits installed in public transport vehicles match international standards.</p>

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The court also ordered the provision of fire extinguishers in all such vehicles, observing all violators would be charged with their route permits cancelled.

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Following the Gujrat incident, the K-P government decided to inspect all school buses. However, the RTA lacks the analyser machines needed to acquire accurate information about every part of the vehicle.</p>

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In addition to forming laws, the new government must also equip the RTA with the tools it needs to ensure vehicle safety and ban those automobiles deemed hazardous to the public.

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Courtesy: ♦Tribune</p>