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Gas Pipeline Fire in Russia's Republic of Chuvashia Kills 3: Governor

By AFP

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Still from video

Three people died on Tuesday when a key gas pipeline in the Republic of Chuvashia in western Russia caught fire, the regional governor told Russian television.

Images circulating on social media showed a large ball of fire billowing over one and two-story buildings in a snow-blanketed village, with residents moving closer to inspect the blaze.

"According to preliminary data, four people were working [at the site]. Unfortunately, three of them died when the gas suddenly ignited," Oleg Nikolayev said.

"One person, a driver, survived and is in a state of shock," he added.

The fire, which emergency services said has now been extinguished, erupted near the village of Yambakhtino, around 600 kilometers east of Moscow.

Local emergency services said the blast occurred during planned repairs on the Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod pipeline, which is also known as the Brotherhood pipeline.

The pipeline, which passes through Ukraine, is one of the main gas links from Russia to Europe.

Moscow has dramatically reduced shipments to Europe in response to Western sanctions over the conflict in Ukraine.

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