

Rains paralyse business in Karachi

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KARACHI: Trading activities remained almost paralysed on Monday as majority of shopping malls, wholesale and retail shops kept their business shut owing to incessant rain coupled with accumulated water on the roads.

However, factory output showed mixed trend as power breakdown in many industrial units had ruined production activities despite large attendance of workers, while supply chain was also hit hard in many industrial areas.

The supply of goods from wholesale to retail markets were also suspended while the supplies of goods to godowns and wholesalers from industries also remained at standstill.

“We carefully estimate a trade loss of Rs5 billion on Monday owing to closure of shops and business centres in the city,” said All Karachi Tajir Itehad Chairman Atiq Mir.

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Some traders tried to open their shops in the morning due to low intensity of rain but they could not succeed amid persistent showers in the evening.

He said the accumulation of rain water at leading arteries had restricted traffic movement causing gridlocks forcing many traders and workers to stay at home in the absence of public and private transport.

The problem of traders further intensified as rain water entered at main shops and godowns at old city areas, thus destroying the goods and causing heavy financial losses.

Atiq said the provincial authorities’ claim of managing heavy rainfall finally ended in a fiasco, bringing down business activities to a standstill because of heavy flooding on the roads and markets. He said there were also reports of short circuit in some markets and cases of electrocution.

Site Association of Industry Chairman Saleem Parekh said production at the area remained normal owing to 70-75 per cent attendance of workers and staffers.

However, movement of goods to the port and supply of raw material to the industries were restricted due to bad road conditions.

President North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry Syed Tariq Rashid said only 10pc production was recorded at the factories despite 90 per cent workers' attendance at the units.

"Power failure in the area from morning till evening had played havoc with production activities and many units could not run their stand-by generators for longer duration," he said.

He said majority of industries, after long power disruption, had asked female staff to leave the premises by 3.00pm while male workers left the factories between 4.00pm and 5.00pm.

Senior Vice-President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry Faraz-ur-Rehman said the production activities at 3,600 units in the area plunged mainly due to 50pc less turnout of workers and power shutdown.

He said non-stop rains had also halted goods' movement to the port besides disrupting arrival of raw material to the industries.

F.B. Area Association of Trade and Industry President Khursheed Ahmed said around 20-30pc of workers could not turn up to their work. "Our area had faced power shutdown from morning till evening thus affecting production activities by 40pc."

Khursheed claimed that export-oriented industries managed to make their export shipments to the ports.

Many small and medium enterprises, who do not have any power generators, were hit hard while many industries could only run their stand-by generators for four to five hours rather for longer duration due to high fuel cost.

All City Tajir Itehad Association General Secretary Mohammad Ahmed Shamsi claimed that filthy rain water damaged goods worth over Rs20bn in the godowns in old city areas.

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