

**Power outages mar trade, industrial activities**

KARACHI: Dilapidated infrastructure and massive power breakdowns hit trade and industrial activities hard for the second consecutive day on Tuesday as monsoon rains continued to batter the city.

Most wholesale markets remained closed though commercial activities resumed partially with the opening of retail shops.

Talking to Dawn, All City Tajir Itehad Association General Secretary Mohammad Ahmed Shamsi said traders in old city areas remained highly perturbed over the accumulation of rain water and sewerage as well as prolonged power outages which made it impossible for them to open shops.

He said the government authorities including governor Sindh, mayor Karachi and local bodies' minister are not taking any practical steps to clear rain water from main markets.

Chairman All Karachi Tajir Itehad (AKTI), Atiq Mir said around 60-70 per cent main markets including wholesale trade at old city areas remained closed on Tuesday. He added that these markets were closed completely on Monday.

"A number of markets failed to open due to massive power breakdowns which lasted for more than 20 hours. Many markets still do not have power supply till Tuesday evening," he added.

Mir said the markets which opened faced dearth of buyers. He claimed that traders suffered a loss of around Rs10 billion on Monday and Tuesday owing to rains, collapse of local bodies system, accumulation of rain water in the markets, disappearance of public transport and prolonged power outages.

Meanwhile, industrial areas showed a mixed trend in terms of workers' attendance and productivity.

However, the situation in Site industrial area deteriorated on Tuesday. According to Chairman Site Association of Industry (SAI) Saleem Parekh, attendance of workers and staff was much less on Tuesday as opposed to a day earlier.

"Many workers could not turn up as they did not get proper sleep due to power failures. Also there was low availability of public transport and accumulated rain water in many areas made movement difficult," he said.

As a result of thin attendance, he estimated that production activities in 3,600 industries hovered between 40-45pc. "We are trying to call workers on Sunday to at least cover up production losses of two days," he added.

President FB Area Association of Trade and Industry, Khursheed Ahmed said the situation relating to workers' absence remained same, with staff attendance hovering around 20pc. However, production on Tuesday was much better as compared to a day ago when it was at around 40pc, Ahmed said.

Movement of container carrying export goods to the port was relatively normal while power situation improved in the area, he added.

Meanwhile, North Kara-chi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI), Syed Tariq Rashid said working environment was worse as only 30pc industries out of total 2,500 units managed to operate. The remaining units were either shut or could not produce anything as many workers failed to show up. “Only 10pc production was recorded on Monday at the factories despite 90pc workers’ attendance at the units,” he added.

Senior Vice-President Korangi Association of Trade and Industry Faraz-ur-Rehman said the situation was comparatively better in the area with production recorded at 70pc in over 3,500 units due to better attendance of workers as compared to 50pc production activities on Monday.

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