

Fire suspends business activities at FTC building

KARACHI: All business activities virtually came to a halt at Finance and Trade Center (FTC) building Monday following high intensity fire that engulfed two floors of the multistory structure and turned all the interior into ashes last Sunday.

The building houses offices of various government and private sector organizations, including Dewan Motors Company (DMC), Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), and National Bank of Pakistan (NBP).

During a brief visit, this scribe observed various offices in the building were closed with a few officials busy removing water from the floors, shifting furniture and other stuff from the damaged portions of the building.

The charred portions were giving an ugly look as everything inside the 6th and 7th floors reduced to ashes. An unpleasant smell of fire could be felt at the surrounding of the building even some 35 hours after the incident. These portions housed offices of NBP and DMC which have been completely damaged by the blaze.

Security guards cordoned off the building while some employees standing at the terrace were whispering over the fire incident. They felt it was a preplanned activity saying the inferno has systematically engulfed the entire section, while some blamed electric short circuit. However, authorities concerned are still clueless about the cause of fire.

“It has come to my observation, such fire incidents at important buildings occur during off-days,” said a person who claimed to be an employee of DMC’s finance department.

A spokesman for DMC confirmed his company’s administration group office at the 7th floor completely damaged by the inferno,” adding that documents and the record are intact as they have been kept at other offices.

The company has its office on the 8th floor of the building as well which is safe, however a thick black layer of fog (generated by the inferno that traveled through windows) has covered everything inside the office rooms including laptops, chairs, tables, documents, etc. “The data is safe.”

The Rangers personnel also visited the building.

“We do not know about the actual cause of fire that initially broke out at the NBP premises.”

Meanwhile, Ibne Hassan, the spokesman for NBP told Business Recorder that the bank’s important record was intact while the office stuff such as computers, furniture have been completely burnt.

Quoting the initial investigations of the authorities concerned, he said the fire broke out as a result of an electric short circuit. However, he said further investigations in this regard are under way.

The TDAP officials said the office remained closed due to suspension of electricity and internet service. Except administration section, all departments were asked to take the day off by the management. The authority’s IT section has been affected as its rooms were filled with water poured by fire brigade official to douse the blaze that engulfed the immediate upper floor.

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