

Our Correspondent

Sindh govt to help industries, commercial centres beef up fire safety systems

The Sindh government, apart from providing support to the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation to beef up its firefighting system, is also ready to work with industrial zones and commercial centres in the city to enhance their safety systems so as to tackle any fire or a similar disaster.

Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah stated this while speaking as the chief guest at the “9th Fire Safety & Security Convention-2019” jointly organised by the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) and the Fire Protection Association of Pakistan (FPAP).

He said the fire safety measures should be fully up to the mark at industrial zones, commercial centres and multi-storey buildings, as people in large numbers were present at any given time at these places whose safety should be duly ensured in case of a fire incident.

Shah said that keeping in view a large number of high-rise buildings in Karachi, the Sindh government had purchased a snorkel of international standards for the KMC so as to beef up its firefighting capabilities. He said that similar more snorkels and other firefighting equipment for the KMC and other municipal agencies in the rest of the province would also be purchased.

He said that it was the responsibility of the government and its relevant agencies that fire safety measures should be adopted in industrial zones, commercial centres and high-rise buildings, but at times slackness was observed by the government authorities in fulfilling such obligations.

He said the government had been doing its best to upgrade, repair and improve civic and municipal infrastructure in the city, including provision of road network, water supply and sewerage system. The minister said that the assistance of the World Bank was being sought in upgrading civic infrastructure of the city.

He said the garbage disposal campaign launched by the Sindh government for Karachi was not just for one month as it would continue till complete resolution of this issue.

Earlier, speaking at the convention, former Karachi administrator Fahim uz Zaman Khan said that Karachi had seen a massive increase in its population since the creation of Pakistan -- up to 60 times -- while it was highly lamentable that its firefighting capabilities had consistently decreased all along this period. He said that industrial units in the city had not learnt any lesson from the Baldia factory fire tragedy of 2012 as they had not undertaken required improvement in fire safety measures for their workers.

He said that the industrial units not adopting required safety measures showed sheer failure of governance in the city. He added that fire safety and disaster control systems of Karachi had seen massive deterioration with the passage of time instead of seeing any improvement.

Naeem Yousuf, former deputy chief fire officer of the KMC, said that recent massive Tezgam train fire tragedy in Rahim Yar Khan had showed that the railway system of the country had serious shortcomings to tackle such fire incidents and similar disasters that massively endangered lives of train passengers.

He said that every train carriage should have its separate fire extinguishers while railway staff boarding a train should also be trained to tackle such fire incidents.

He said that the railways should develop a strong communication system so as to do emergency messaging between trains and also to alert the authorities at railway stations about any disaster during a moving train service.

He said big railway stations should have their own fire station and one such facility had been present at the City Railway Station in Karachi but later on it became non-existent due to official neglect.

Member of Sindh Assembly belonging to PTI Dr Imran Ali Shah said that hospitals generally lacked proper safety measures for their visitors and patients.

President FPAP Imran Taj shed light on the methods and technologies being used the world over to secure residential, commercial, and industrial buildings so as to protect them against any fire incident. President NFEH Muhammad Naeem Qureshi said that his association would continue to provide utmost support to the provincial government to adopt strict fire protection measures by the industries and commercial centres.