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2nd Fire & Safety Convention 2011 & 1st Fire Safety Awards 2011

Big money, bigger risk: 'Seths need to follow fire safety too'



National Forum for Environment & Fire Protection Association Organized 2nd Fire Safety Convention & Safety Award, Picture Shows group photo of award recipients from various leading organizations alongwith Sardar Yaseen Malik, Kalim Siddiqui, Tariq Moin, Naem Qureshi, Nadeem Ashraf & Others.

KARACHI: Although most multinational companies are following fire protection and safety protocols at their installations and offices, other mostly 'seth owned' companies are not paying any attention to the standards followed worldwide.

These observations were made by the managing director of Haseen Habib Private Limited, Fawad Ateeq Bari, at the Second Fire and Safety Convention 2011 held at the Pearl

Continental hotel on Tuesday in a day-long session. HHPL is the largest importer for fire-fighting, alarm, detection and suppression systems in the country.

Bari told The Express Tribune in a chat during a break that the problem was that the fire inspectors are not doing their job to ensure that no company bends the rules in order to skimp on money at the expense of safety. "Out of 10 seth-owned companies, only one follows the international standards," he observed.

During his keynote speech, he extolled the importance of key fire suppression systems like the FM-200 and urged the business community to go for authenticated products. "The same FM-200 system that we provide is available at Lucky Star in Karachi for Rs100,000, but be very careful in what you buy since it may prove to be hazardous."

The Fire Protection Association of Pakistan's president, Farhat Hussain, said in his welcome address that the objective of the conference was to create awareness in general among the business community and inform the companies already taking fire safety measures on trends emerging worldwide.



The speakers time and again reminded businesses that just because fires had not broken out at their companies and industries, it despite the fact that they don't have even the basic fire-fighting systems, doesn't mean that their future is secure. They were reminded about the huge fire in 2007 at the Berger paint company, which suffered billions of losses when it spread at one of their manufacturing facilities, forcing the company to shift operations to Lahore.

Habib Bank Limited's Colonel (retired) Ali Kausar Zaidi

gave a detailed overview of the fire safety and evacuation plan put in place at the building. "We not only have an advanced command and control centre acquired by Siemens, but we have also built a special 23-floor fire escape staircase at our Karachi building," Zaidi said.

He cautioned, however, that an extra exit system also means that an extra entry into the building has been created. "A bank's foremost concern is security. Therefore ensure that the fire exit doors and staircases are used only in the event of a fire," he said, adding that at the Habib Bank the doors open only when a fire is detected at a floor.

Envirograf director Mohammad Imran talked about the importance of preventing fire from spreading in a building once an accident occurs. "One of the main reasons why the fire spread in the Marriot Islamabad bombing was that the building fire safety measures were not designed in such a way that the fire would have been compartmentalised," he said. He gave a detailed technical presentation on how one could do exactly that.

International Power Chief Fire Officer Adil Masti Khan



talked about the need for training and providing fire fighters with modern equipment. "I would suggest that we should seriously consider introducing college and university-level programmes since this is a specialised field," he said. Pakistan has two fire institutes, one in Karachi and another in Islamabad but they need to be upgraded.

KESC Fire Protection Manager Khalid Nadeem stressed creating awareness among people that not every type of fire extinguisher works for all types of fires. "If the fire is caused by electrical equipment, you don't use foam-based extinguishers," he said.

The correct ones to use are Carbon Dioxide-based extinguishers.

Other speakers included the technical manager for Beurovertas, who talked about road safety, the president of Byco Petroleum Kalim Siddiqui, and Adamjee Insurance's Mansoor Ali Khan, who also spoke at length about work place safety. The chief guest at the event was Hilton Pharma chairman Sardar Mohammad Yasin Malik. The first fire safety book in Urdu by chief fire officer Port Qasim Siddique Shaikh was also launched. ■