

MAJOR FIRE INCIDENT AT SANOFI INDIA Ltd.

KOLKATA, 08 MAY 2021



DISASTER MANAGEMENT BY
CISS LIMITED, KOLKATA



Fire in Park St high-rise, employees evacuated

Pic: Subhojyoti Kanjilal

12 Fire Tenders Doused The Flames In 2 Hrs

Subhojyoti Kanjilal

Kolkata: A fire broke out on the fifth floor of Apeejay House on Park Street — a landmark building in central Kolkata that has witnessed multiple fire incidents in the past few years — triggering panic in the area.

The ongoing enhanced safety restrictions ensured that most of the offices were shut and there were not many employees at the building when the fire was spotted around 2.40pm. By the time firemen reached the spot and started dousing the fire, every one inside the building could be safely evacuated.

The nine-storey building, spread over three blocks, houses around two dozen offices. On Tuesday, the fire had broken out at the office of a pharmaceutical firm, next to a private bank on the fifth floor of Block C. Although the office was closed, there were some

REPEATED BLAZES TRIGGER PANIC

Apeejay House

Total floors | **9**

Total blocks | **3**

Total number of offices | **Around 25**

Past fires

Jun 8, 2021 | Fire broke out at a fifth floor office

Nov 5, 2018 | Fire broke out in the server room of a fifth floor office

Jan 1, 2012 | Fire broke out at a sixth floor office



The fire broke out at the office of a pharmaceutical firm, next to a private bank on the fifth floor of Block C in Apeejay House on Tuesday

bank employees who were evacuated immediately after the fire alarm rang and the security guards alerted the employees. There were some employees at a private office in the commercial building as well, who had reportedly come for an in-office vaccination drive but fire or police officials couldn't confirm it.

"The fire started inside a closed office of the pharma company. However, firemen reached the building fast and contained the fire within the office itself. The fire was doused in less than two hours," said Firhad Hakim, chairman of the board of administrators at Kolkata Municipal Corporation. To control the

fire, firemen had to break down the glass window panes and sprayed water from inside as well as outside the building. State fire minister Sujit Bose also visited the spot, overseeing the fire-fighting operations as firemen on 12 fire tenders and a hydraulic ladder doused the flames by 4.15pm.

"I was at my store when there was a sudden commotion and people started running out of the building. I also came out and saw thick black smoke billowing out of a fifth floor window. The sight was scary," said Samir Sadhukhan, who works at a confectionery unit on the ground floor of the building.

Incidentally, there was a fire on the sixth floor of the same building in 2012 while another fire had broken out on the fifth floor in 2018.

"We will conduct an inquiry into Tuesday's fire to find out the seat of blaze and will also expand the scope of investigation to find out the reason behind multiple instances of fire at this building," said a senior official of the fire and emergency services department.

TIME (Hrs)	CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS
0800	Mr. Santosh Changri, Security Guard deployed by CISS Limited at Sanofi India Limited (site) takes charge of duty, he takes rounds of the premises and finds that the fire hooter at the VC (video conferencing) room is getting activated repeatedly.
	Santosh calls up Mr. Arindam Das at his residence and reports the issue. . Mr. Das takes note of the report and tells Santosh that the necessary action will be taken to rectify the issue. No other instruction was passed on management of systems and eqpt at site.
	As per SoP, SG takes rounds every 02 hours of entire premises and reported to Mr. Das. No untoward indication or event took place including non-activation of fire hooter.
1405	Fire panel alarm gets activated and SG rushes towards the alarm panel, which is at the entrance of server room. He observes thick black smoke rising out from the server room.
1406	SG disengages power lines by turning 'OFF' lever at the MCB panel, which is next to the server room.
1408 onwards	SG calls up Mr. Das but the call remains unattended SG calls up Mr. Giri, Security I/c deputed by Apeejay House FMS but this call also remains unattended.
1410 onwards	SG takes the fire extinguisher (ABC Type) and approaches the server room. SG operates the fire extinguisher. The Server room was full of smoke and visibility inside the server room was zero. SG aimed the extinguisher in the general direction of the servers and emptied the entire extinguisher. Thick black smoke continued to bellow out of the server room.
1420 onwards	Mr. Das and Mr. Giri in quick succession called up SG and took a quick assessment of the situation.
	Fire fighting team from Apeejay House FMS arrive at sanofi and approach the server room. They commence fire-fighting operations as the fire keeps raging and spreading. SG Santosh stays in the background and assists the team.
	05 Fire tenders reach the premises and station themselves at the rear section of the building compound, at the approach of the rear staircases. Fire sum and pump house are located here. Major fire fighting commences.
	SG Santosh goes to 4 th floor and opens access at the fire exit for rescue teams.
1440	06 additional fire tenders reach the premises and join in the fire fighting efforts
1630	Fire is extinguished and cooling operations commences. Fire tenders and other eqpt and manpower commence retreat.
1730	SG Santosh and other personnel trapped at Sanofi are brought down. The SG is found to be exhausted and overwhelmed by smoke inhalation. The SG is well looked after and brought back to composure and comfort after some rest and refreshments.
1820	Kolkata Police and WB Fire Services takes possession and seals off the premises. Fire and forensic investigation commences for a through study to find the causes for frequent major fire incidents in this building .
2100	SG Santosh is dropped at his residence at Tarakeshwar (60km from Kolkata) and handed over to his family members.

Fire at Apeejay House, none hurt

**OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT**

Calcutta: A fire broke out on the fifth floor of Apeejay House on Park Street on Tuesday afternoon. No one was injured, police said.

A number of offices, which fortunately had fewer than usual employees, had to be evacuated. Police cordoned off the area before firefighters launched an operation with 10 tenders that continued for around three hours.

The fire started around 2.40pm in the server room of a company that deals in medical items. The office was closed and so was the server room.

Firefighters had to break open window panes to access the room before bringing in pipes carrying water from the ground floor. Later, a hydraulic ladder was sent to the site but it was not used.

Firhad Hakim, the chairman of the board of administrators of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, who visited the site, said: "The fire could be contained in the server room."

Apeejay House, the headquarters of the Apeejay Surrendra Group, is home to a number of offices and banks. An Apeejay business centre functions from the eighth floor.

Only a handful of people,



Smoke comes out of the fifth floor of Apeejay House on Park Street on Tuesday. Picture by Pradip Sanyal

including some employees of a private bank, were in the building as the majority of the offices were closed because of the Covid curbs.

"We were asked to take the stairs at the rear," said an employee of the private bank. "By then smoke had filled parts of the sixth and seventh floors."

Apeejay House is located a few metres from Stephen Court, where a fire in the summer of 2010 had claimed 43 lives.

Senior officials of the fire and emergency services said that soon after white smoke was spotted coming out of windows, some of the building's maintenance staff started fetching water from the underground reservoir using hose

pipes, while a few ran upstairs to evacuate employees and others.

"Since the building houses several offices, banks and other establishments, fire-fighting gadgets there are regularly checked and their condition is recorded in a log-book," said an officer of Park Street police station.

A team of senior officers led by the deputy commissioner of police, south, reached the spot and launched an evacuation drive as fire tenders started arriving one after another.

"A forensic audit will reveal the cause of the fire. The fire could be contained because of prompt intervention," said fire and emergency services minister Sujit Bose.

