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Caught in ruckus, MC House blinks to approve fire academy

In a haste to end a recent House Meet, the councillors passed an agenda to set up a fire academy in the city without due discussion.

The agenda was the last one to be taken up just after the discussion on the exemption given to Congress councillor Devinder Singh Babla from appearing in the House. Due to the ruckus created in the House, the agenda was passed without discussion.

The Mayor after her study tour to Gujarat had written a note to the Municipal Commissioner to get an agenda prepared for setting up a fire academy. The Commissioner constituted a committee consisting of Additional Commissioner P K Sharma, chairman of Fire and Emergency Services Committee Arshad Khan and Station Fire Officer M L Sharma to visit Delhi and study the fire academy of the Capital.

The committee observed that the fire academy in Delhi was set up on four acres of land and the total cost of the project was Rs 4 crore excluding the cost of land, vehicle, equipment, etc. While the strength of staff in the Delhi academy was 62 and 2,200 at the Delhi fire wing, the strength of the Fire and Emergency Services Wing of MC is 220. There are 50 fire stations in Delhi as against seven in Chandigarh.

The members observed that the proposal to set up a fire academy in Chandigarh is not economically viable and suggested that instead of setting up the academy, training in fire fighting can be imparted to the MC staff through outsourcing.

The MC had also received a letter from the National Fire Academy, Vadodara, asking for a permission to start Firemen's Training course in Chandigarh.

While the MC passed the agenda to set up the academy, none of these options were discussed. The objections raised by the committee were also not considered.

Mayor Kamlesh said the issue will be resolved during the House Meet in December.

"Instead of spending money on imparting training to firemen after they are recruited, the fire academy will ensure that trained personnel are hired. The MC already has the requisite equipment for it," she said.