

Fire victims suspect foul play

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Update: 27 May, 2011 - Even as police investigate the cause of the third Chamkhar town fire this early morning, victims suspect a foul play in the fire, which destroyed 22 houses including two traditional structures, office of the Bhutan post

and Tashi cell.

The fire was first noticed at around 2:20 am and could be brought under control only after four hours at 6:30 am.

An eyewitness and a family member of the Shoe centre shop in Chamkhar said the fire was first spotted at around 2:20 am when his mother shouted to wake him up after she noticed the fire starting from the corner of their shop. "When I woke up my mother has already put few buckets of water. I woke up other members in the house and we put off the fire," he said.

He called the police to report the incident and was putting his children to bed when he was disturbed by commotion on the other side of the row. "Around 3:45 another fire broke off between the Bhutan Post office and a medical shop below a shop selling religious items, Gedhen tshongkhang," he said. "There is no way a fire could start from that part if somebody had not done it intentionally," he said. His shop was also razed to the ground.

According to the Sither Lhamo the owner of Gedhen Tshongkhang, the fire was burning from below her shop when she woke up. "When I woke up the room was full of smoke and we got almost stuck inside," she said weeping. "I couldn't even grab cloths for my children. We almost lost our lives," said the mother of three. The fire also destroyed eight units of the newly constructed houses located behind the Kumar shop.

No casualties and injuries were reported so far.

By Samten Yeshi Bumthang

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