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200 shops gutted as Balkh fire continues

Aug 16, 2013

A huge fire swept through a multi-storey market in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital of northern Balkh province, destroying at least 200 shops, officials said on Friday.

The scene, north of the shrine on the Maulana Jalaluddin Balkhi street, showed flames leaping from three portions of the building, also threatening a branch of the Bakhtar Bank in an adjacent building, Balkh police chief Col. Abdul Razaq Qadri told Pajhwok Afghan News.

He said the blaze broke out around 4pm and firefighters, who reached the site within next seven minutes, had not been able so far to douse the huge fire.

The police chief said they had requested the Afghan military and ISAF for assistance, but none of them had reached the site as yet. He said the fire could ravage the entire market if not put out at the earliest.

The fire which occurred in the Shahzada Market's basement for unknown reason had spread to the building's third floor, gutting 200 shops so far.

One of the affected shopkeepers, Haji Ismail, said his shop had completely destroyed in the fire that caused him \$90000 in losses.

