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# Fire at EPF

550 staff safely **EVACUATED** as side of building engulfed

Blaze fuelled by use of **FLAMMABLE** cladding material

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**P**ETALING JAYA: Sparks from repair works caused a fire at the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) branch building here yesterday, forcing the evacuation of all 550 staff and members of the public.

The blaze spread rapidly due to strong winds and the use of highly-flammable polyethylene cladding on the facade of the building in Jalan Gasing, said Fire and Rescue Department deputy director-general (operations) Datuk Soiman Jahid (pix).

"Such cladding should not be used on buildings as it is highly combustible.

"This is the first time we have had a fire involving the cladding of a building," he told a press conference at the scene.

"Fortunately, there was no damage inside the offices and no one was hurt. There was only damage to the cladding on the fourth and sixth floors."

The fire broke out at 11.30am and was brought under control within 30 minutes by about 70 firefighters from four stations here and Kuala Lumpur.

EPF said in a statement yesterday that the branch office will be closed temporarily until further notice.

Its corporate affairs department said the branch crisis management

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Motorists along the Federal Highway watch as flames engulf a side of the building yesterday.

ZULFADU ZAKIR/THESUN

## Couple who sold it all, lose it all

**MIAMI:** A couple who sold all their possessions so they could sail around the world have been left with nothing after their boat sank just two days into their journey.

Tanner Broadwell and Nikki Walsh began their adventure on a 28-foot sailboat last week, setting off from the marina in Tarpon Springs.

Two days later, the bottom of

their boat struck an unseen object underwater and quickly started to take on water, forcing them to evacuate. They were left with just their two-year-old dog Remy, their social security cards, a mobile phone and some dog food and clothes.

Speaking after the incident, the couple said they had planned to escape modern life on the sailboat last year. For two years

they planned and saved, with Broadwell driving for Uber to make extra money.

"I sold everything I had to do this," Broadwell said.

"I lost everything in a matter of 20 minutes."

The boat remains in the water, and the coast guard has told the couple it could cost up to US\$10,000 (about RM40,000) to raise and store it.

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