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Industries discuss climate change, safety tips

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Ahmedabad : Industrialists from various clusters in Ahmedabad met on Tuesday to study how climate change can ruin their businesses if precautions are not taken, even as organizers prepare a vulnerability map of industrial clusters across Gujarat.

The need to prepare businesses for possible impacts of climate change was a pressing concern, given case studies tabled at the meet saying that industrial estates could experience climate change induced floods and a rise in temperature that could make production costlier since much depends on efficient cooling systems.

Dieter Mutz, director of GIZ, a German government body working to promote international cooperation for sustainable development and which is assisting the state chapter of FICCI in the effort, said it was conceived because preparing for climate change has been popular in rural, urban and agricultural sectors but not among industries.

Industries often say they want to curb their emissions and effluents, but they don't talk about preparing for the risks," Mutz said, adding preparing against climate change induced disasters is even more important for industrial estates that lie on the state's coasts.

Representatives of German think-tank Adelphi, who spoke at the meet, said climate change forecasts predict Gujarat could experience rising temperatures and more rainfall in shorter periods. In other words, intense rains that would increase surface run-offs, drought during non-rainy seasons and sudden floods.

These could hamper businesses, especially supply routes and logistics, wear down infrastructure and cause hardships to workers without whom production would suffer, they said.

This was corroborated by a case study of five industries by the Gujarat Cleaner Production Centre, a government agency, that said floods and heavy rainfalls could cost untold losses to businesses and their workers, while higher temperatures would reduce the efficiency of cooling systems, a major facility of every industry.

Similar conclusions were derived by a case study prepared by academics of CEPT University, which looked at both the Naroda Industrial Estate and surrounding areas where up to 30,000 workers live.

The CEPT study said excessive rains and lack of storm-water drainage systems could lead to floods severe enough to shut down several industries there, besides inflicting losses on many others. The same freaky weather could also lead to difficulties at the worker colonies nearby, with 95 per cent of those surveyed admitting they do not know a safe place to go in case a disaster strikes.