

Modern fire fighting facility launched in Gujarat

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The Gujarat Chief Minister, Mr Narendra Modi, has said the western State has emerged as India's petrochemical hub because of its sound disaster management policy. The policy was put in place following the devastating temblor that hit the State in 2001, causing massive damage to its infrastructure.

Speaking after inaugurating Asia's first modern facility for live fire fighting demonstrations, at an oil-fired zero discharge prop here, he said following the earthquake, Gujarat became the first State to formulate a Disaster Management Act, equipped local bodies with fire fighting equipment and created awareness in schools. Gujarat's moves were later considered by the Centre, which asked the other States to follow suit.

The facility has been set up at the Institute of Fire Safety and Disaster Management Studies (IFSDMS), in collaboration with the Fire Science Academy (FSA), University of Nevada, Reno, USA. Notably, Vadodara and Bharuch districts have emerged as hubs for the chemicals, petrochemicals and pharmaceuticals industry over the last few decades.

Set up in an area of 100 acres, the Institute would provide advanced emergency response training at the flammable liquid fire fighting training centre, said Mr Vikram Mahurkar, Chairman and Managing Director of the Checkmate Group, which has set up the Institute. The group offers safety and security to over 800 industrial clients across India.

The Institute has also tied up with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to offer diplomas in fire fighting and protection, crisis and disaster management, rescue, hazardous materials management, incident command and instructor training.

Officials from various industries across the hydrocarbons sector, petrochemicals and other industries watched the live demonstration organised by the FSA experts.

The 14-year-old Institute has so far trained over 2,100 firemen, providing 90 per cent of them campus placements. The Checkmate Group, having six verticals, has a presence across 18 States with a workforce of 40,000 security guards, security officers and safety officers, Mr Mahurkar added.

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