

Shipping containers marked best for post disaster housing

Int'l experts discuss issues at IITGn on Wednesday

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Scientists from EPFL Lausanne in Switzerland, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) in Malaysia and the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGn) are presently exploring the use of large shipping containers for housing and re-urbanization under disaster-like situations.

In a workshop conducted on Wednesday at IITGn, 'Containers for housing and re-urbanization after disasters', scientists opined that shipping containers are structurally very strong and resistant to natural disasters such as earthquakes. The objective of the workshop was to explore and investigate the use of shipping containers to provide modular housing solutions in disaster-prone areas.

Professor Gaurav Srivastava of IITGN said, "Shipping containers are mainly utilised to transport goods through ships. They are typically made of steel and are structurally very strong. These qualities make them sufficiently resistant to natural disasters such as earthquakes. While regular reinforced concrete and masonry buildings are prone to failure during earthquakes, container based houses are expected to perform much better in such situations. They are more economical as well."

Dr Harry Sandberg of EPFL Lausanne said that containers are light enough to be lifted and transported conveniently. He also said that contrary to general belief, containers do not get hotter than concrete houses, as long as a roof is created over them to avoid exposure to direct sunlight.

The workshop also discussed at length about cities affected by earthquakes and the kinds of measures taken, and the loopholes in such measures.