

# Telangana rains: Over 35,000 jobs lost

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HYDERABAD: After wading through waist-deep water, Ajit Yadav returned to his workplace, a food processing unit at Cherlapally, after three days on Sunday. But upon unlocking the door, he found his workplace in ruins. Worse, he was out of job because his employer said it would take months to set things in order.

"I have several mouths to feed but now with many units shut due to floods, I am at a loss," said Yadav, who migrated from Jharkhand looking for work.

Ajit's story is one of many , as over 35,000 daily-wage labourers have lost their livelihood with rains lashing the city recently , sources said. With over

10,000 small units along the low-lying industrial belt of Quthbullapur, Dulapally , Jeedimetla, Cherlapally, Kukatpally and Balanagar, completely ruined following the heavy rains, the fate of many daily wagers remains uncertain. Many units which were completely submerged and have been inaccessible so far, were opened over the weekend to sights of damaged machinery and raw material.

The damage has thrown life out of gear for workers, who hail from Odisha, Bihar and West Bengal.

"On reaching our electric bulb manufacturing factory , I discovered that there was no possibility of work till the water recedes. Having survived on a hand-to-mouth situation, we have almost no savings. We are being told that the factories will not reopen for two months. It has been difficult to put food on the table for the last few days. How are we going to survive?" asked Raghu, who hails from Khurda in Odisha.

"Apart from many industries around Jeedimetla getting flooded, areas where our employees stay have also been badly affected. To add to problems, there are power cuts and connectivity issues to due bad roads," said Srirama Murthy , managing director, Scarlet Industries at Balanagar and member Jeedimetla industrial association.

Industries, including those focusing on engineering, steel, plastics, bulk drugs, and food processing. are among those worst hit. "Two of our storage facilities in Dulapally and Jeedimetla have been submerged in five-feet deep dirty water for four to five days, completely damaging our stock. We have lost more than 300 tonnes of petro-chemical products (used by other industries). We are still unable to enter the units," said Manoj Duggad, managing director, Ayushman Merchants Pvt Ltd, manufacturers and suppliers of industrial chemicals. He estimated the loss to be between Rs 90 lakh and Rs 1 crore.

From having to re-do electrical connections, to losing out on orders, to buying new machinery , the industrial units that supply goods in Telangana as well as to AP , Karnataka and Maharashtra are going to take a while to recover. "Loss is on many levels including with respect to material, worker payment, machinery and products. The loss would be easily over Rs 1,000 crore," said Ravindra Modi, president, Federation of Telangana and AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry , adding food processing and pharma units have sustained major losses.