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Mayapuri still ‘mildly radioactive’

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After removing 10 sources of radiation from the Mayapuri scrap market in the past one week, mild radioactivity is still being reported from the area, say scientists.

Top officials at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said sensors were still detecting mild radioactivity although the source was yet to be found.

“We are looking for it. It could also be the radiation from the sources already found and taken away,” said a senior official.

On Thursday, the NDMA along with the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) decided to send the blood samples of 40 people—34 scrap workers and six policemen—to ascertain radioactive poisoning.

“These people have been in the vicinity of the radiation source in the past 20 days. Although they have not shown any symptoms, we have sent their samples just to be sure,” said Dr J.K. Bansal, NDMA member.

“If the samples are found positive, the 40 people will be given radio protectors.”

Despite scanning 800 shops in the area, the NDMA and AERB could not say for sure if the area was radiation free. During examinations, B.B. Bhattacharya, another NDMA member said scientists have also found some radiation in the soil and it was collected. “This will be disposed off properly,” he said.

As fear gripped the scrap-market workers, the NDMA officials went to the site and demonstrated the various ways with which the occupational hazard of radiation can be minimised.

“We have demonstrated some RADTriage badges, which change colour if a person infected with radiation poisoning wears it. They could use it to ascertain their status. It costs around Rs 1,000,” Dr Bansal said. In the board of doctors treating the infected, Dr Bansal said everyone’s condition was stable expect Rajendra’s.

Two more sources of radiation were detected at the Mayapuri scrap market on Tuesday, taking the total sources of radioactive

substance found in the industrial area to 10.

Eight sources of Cobalt-60 were recovered last week after six persons were admitted to city hospitals with burn injuries caused due to radiation.