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Gujarati helps US fight its war, bags top award

By Anil Pathak
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

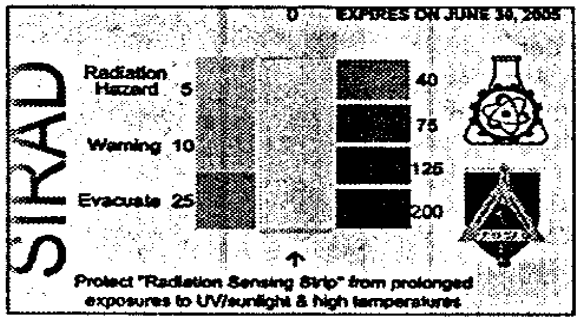
Ahmedabad: What does Gujarat have to do with American soldiers in Iraq? The inter-agency Technical Support Working Group (TSWG) for the US soldiers is widely using a unique tool to help them respond to radiation, developed by a scientist from Mehsana district in his laboratory in New Jersey.

And, as the US endured another anniversary of the WTC tragedy amidst heightened security threat, the Self Indicating Instant Radiation Alert Dosimeter or SIRAD, a credit card sized object to help both the military and civilians detect dirty bombs or nuclear attacks, has bagged this year's Frost and Sullivan Excellence in Technology award.

Developed by Gordhan Patel in his warehouse-turned-laboratory, JP Labs, SIRAD can be used by soldiers, police officers and emergency medical personnel to measure their own radiation exposure while dealing with the aftermath of bomb explosions. Users wear the dosimeter so that when they are exposed to radiation from a bomb or nuclear detonation, the sensing strip of SIRAD instantly turns blue.

The colour intensifies as the exposure increases, providing the wearer and medical personnel instant information on cumulative radiation exposure of the victim.

"The dosimeter was partially developed in a project that was funded by the US Navy, which was evaluating prototype samples. The US needed it for combating terrorism and monitoring exposure to radiation in the event of bomb explosion," says the 62-year-old inventor, who has a doctorate from the Sardar Patel University.



The Self Indicating Instant Radiation Alert Dosimeter

The SIRAD is a credit card-sized object which helps both the military and civilians detect dirty bombs or nuclear attacks

"The dosimeter produces instant results as against other conventional methods like Geiger counters, ionisation chamber and X-ray film. My lab could enhance the level of US homeland security by developing this breakthrough radiation dosimeter. We have been supplying radiation dosimeters to the US armed forces, police, medical persons and employees working in and living near nuclear power plants in the US," he adds.

The journey began when a rattled US government sent its Technical Support Working Group on a talent-scouting mission for anti-terrorism gadgets after September 11, 2001. It received some 16,000 proposals. And, it was Patel's dosimeter that made it to the list of 120 that the US Department of Homeland Security found useful.

The project was supported by grants worth $1.5 million from the US government. Patel's JP Labs — named after his children Jessica and Paresh — has contracts to the tune of $ 105,000 from the US Department of Homeland Security to supply thousands of cards.

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