



Dealers look for pieces of iron in the charred remains of the Mundka market
AMIT MEHRA

Delhi's scrap tale

Tikri Kalan market allotted to plastic scrap dealers after 1995 Jwalapuri fire has found no takers even as trade flourished at the illegal Mundka market, gutted on Sunday

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AT the Mundka plastic scrap market, which was gutted on Sunday, the fire continues to burn at small islands. The rest of the market wears a dead, charred look. Many dealers who lost their shops to the blaze continue to scavenge the area for any remnants.

Opposite this market is the Tikri Kalan DDA industrial market area, allotted to the PVC dealers by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) after a fire broke out at the Jwalapuri plastic scrap market on June 6, 1995.

The Tikri Kalan market, which has amenities like a fire station, a dispensary and a police station, is deserted too. The reason: no dealer has shifted here.

According to officials, the DDA invested Rs 40 crore for the entire construction of Tikri Kalan market. The complex, which was to house over 3,000 PVC scrap dealers, has been unable to draw dealers away from the illegal Mundka market.

Secretary of PVC Old Waste Plastic Association Ashok Tanwar says the land allotted by DDA is not enough and therefore dealers are not ready to shift.

"We need more than 500 sq m of land, while the DDA is offering us around 125 sq m. It's too little to be of any use to us," says Tanwar.

There are also a few like Ramcharan who are unaware that they were entitled to some land as compensation by the DDA after the Jwalapuri fire incident.

The Mundka market,

meanwhile, had continued to grow as DDA land lay unused. "There are around 25,000 workers here. Since this business is VAT-free, so the unauthorised market is expanding," says Puneet Kumar, a scrap dealer, who estimates his loss due to the Sunday fire to be around Rs 20 lakh.

A property dealer in the area, Raj Kumar of Billu Properties, says, "Out of the total 3,000 PVC dealers, around 2,000 are ready to shift to Tikri Kalan. The feud boils down to the issue of big and small entrepreneurship."

Kumar also alleges political pressure in the Tikri Kalan area as "the market is actually run by a member of the state cabinet".

Tanwar believes the government should provide additional benefits to them as they are taking care of the waste not managed by the government. "We are working in place of the MCD and still are not getting any help from the government. Ninety-nine per cent of the workers are Schedule Castes here. There are around 400 proprietors who should get the allotted land at Tikri Kalan," he says.

Another scrap dealer, Ajay Chaddha claims the scrap

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metal recovered after the collapse of the twin towers in the US arrived here. "The metal was exported to various countries in Asia and Europe, a lot of it came here too. Not many people know this," he says.

Popularly known as the automobile market, shop-owners claim every car part is available here. Dealers usually buy discarded cars — damaged in accidents — in auctions announced by private companies and vehicle dealers. The vehicles are then dismantled and recycled by dealers who sell them in the automobile market.

"From spark plugs, horns, car seats to the chassis of buses and trucks, everything is available," says Gyani Prasad, a worker in a scrap unit as he fixes bearings for excavators used in large-scale construction works.

Explaining his job, Prasad says he picks up bearings of different machines and repairs them, making them



Traders say every automobile part is available at this market
RENUKA PURI

Mayapuri market: Asia's largest, unnoticed here

AANCHAL BANSAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 12

THE heavy smell of grease and the deafening sound of metal being hammered in almost each of the 2,000-odd shops in the Mayapuri scrap market are hard to miss.

But, apart from the freshly painted bus stop off the Ring Road, there is nothing to point to the existence of Asia's largest scrap market in West Delhi, functioning for the last 45 years.

Set up by the Delhi Development Authority in 1975, the scrap market spread across a radius of 4 km was constructed to relocate scrap dealers from Motia Khan market in Paharganj. Boards at several shops of the original allottees still bear a reference to them being the 'originals' from Motia Khan.

"It is only after the radiation incident that people started visiting this place. We get scrap metal from across the world, mostly from China" says H S Singh, a scrap dealer.

With no roads and drain water spilling over the dirt tracks created by trucks delivering or picking up tonnes of metal, Singh's claims come as no surprise.

Another scrap dealer, Ajay Chaddha claims the scrap

good as new. "Most machines are very expensive and a part as small as a bearing can be expensive. Here they are available at half the cost," he says.

Prasad, like most workers in the area, lives in Khajan Basti, close to the market.

"We are the biggest recyclers of ferrous and non-ferrous material. But there are no checks on the scrap being bought here. We simply buy material through auctions," says Hemraj Gupta, market association head.

The barriers put by the Delhi Police, after the radiation incident last week, have been removed as business has to continue.

Though the industrial area is supposed to be serviced by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, dealers claim that civic amenities are unheard of.

Mayor Kanwar Sain, meanwhile, says, "We have been sealing all unauthorised shops. The scrap (radioactive substance) had come from outside Delhi, so we cannot bear responsibility for the radiation incident."

Now, with the Delhi government taking charge of all industrial estates in the city, Sain says that civic amenities are now the responsibility of the government.