

The Sinking City

Written by Administrator
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By Sidharth Mishra



This year every time that it has rained in Delhi, the government has gone to the town that it never rained like this before. However, to many the rains and the subsequent deluge has reminded of an action-adventure game developed by Frogwares, inspired by horror fiction author HP Lovecraft, named The Sinking City. The plot goes like this, the town of Oakmont is made up of seven districts which have all been affected by flooding to various degrees. The water is so polluted that it can make fatal damage to the player's health and sanity.

The pictures of office goers trudging their bike in shoulder deep water at the underpasses is similar to the graphics in the game. Since these waters on the city's roads are from the overflowing drains and sewer lines, their potential to cause fatal illness is as much.

Talking of photos, the social media handles have been full of 'waterfalls' from the elevated roads. These pictures were not there till a few years back, as the drain pipes installed in these elevated roads to take the water down to the soak pits built at the bottom of flyover pillars still functioned.

In absence of any maintenance, these drain pipes have worn off over the years and thus the 'waterfall' in the city. So, the Delhi government which has made grand announcements about creating tourist spots along the grand trunk drains taking water to Yamuna could add the view of these 'waterfalls' as a bonus to the tourists' itinerary.

Delhi is sinking, not just physically but mentally too from civic harassments. In the past decade the government has failed anything worthy to add to its infrastructure. In 2013, when the Arvind Kejriwal government came to power, it inherited the huge makeover undertaken during the Commonwealth Games (CWG). Instead of adding to it, it has even failed to maintain them.

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The supporters of Mr Kejriwal may quickly jump to his defence saying that the civic agencies, the central government, the rain gods and anyone else on their hate list is to be blamed. The point to be noted here is that as the leader of governance in the city, nobody stops the chief minister from directing the chief secretary to coordinate with the civic body chiefs to overcome these challenges.

However, if the political executive decides to take a cantankerous stand in public vis-à-vis the civic bodies, the officials of the two government bodies too think it to be prudent to remain in their posts and not stick the neck out. When a government lives by mere publicity, the area it governs no wonder falls like a house of cards on the first onset of an environmental challenge.

Some years after former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, whose tenure saw an era of infrastructure development, had demitted office, had told this writer in an interview that the city did not value the infrastructure built during the CWG 2010 but history would make them realise its worth. There should be no qualms in admitting that Delhi today is living on the infrastructure built and upgraded a decade ago and it, however, is now creaking.

In the second decade of the 21st century, when we are making various claims about Delhi being a global city, the first thing to ensure that our airport remains functional and doesn't get flooded by a few hours of rains. The second being that at least the roads connecting the city to the airport remain free from flooding, lest it gives Frogwares the idea to place the next edition of his game in the sinking city of Delhi.

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