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# Bring industries and Delhi goes down the drain

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**T**HE SWELL in the industrial areas in the Capital, after 24 of residential zones were changed to industrial, is going to add to ever-burgeoning problem of effluent treatment. The sewerage network, barely capable of catering to municipal and industrial waste, is going to completely fall apart after industries are legitimised in the 24 residential zones.

With no Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) or plans of it in sight, the effluents from factory units will directly enter the main drains. The metal and cement drains will corrode with untreated heavy metals and strong acids, in concentrated levels, flowing in them.

The fate of these areas will be similar to that of the industrial areas of Wazirpur and Samaipur Badli. It took more than 20 years for a CETP in Wazirpur.

Another 10 years are going to pass before any of these 24 zones are connected to a suitable treatment plant. In Wazirpur and Badli, one has to wear Duck-back boots because there are no drains. The acidic waste flows on the ground. Vehicle tyres are replaced annually because the corrosion is

acute. The pH of the effluents is so acidic that the use of lime and chemicals has gone up 10 times to achieve the same results. The acids have started to corrode the appliances in the plant.

“The effluents would contain hydrochloric, nitric and sulphuric acids in varying concentrations. Heavy metals such as chromium, nickel, zinc, cadmium, cyanide would be typically found in industrial area like Wazirpur which has steel electro-plating and pickling units. If all this gets into the main drains untreated, there is irrevocable damage,” says Dilip Biswas, Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

In sewerage conditions are so bad in industrial areas that most of the time the effluents bypasses CETPs treatment plants and flow into the main drains.

Of the 21 designated industrial areas, only two CETPs function. The remaining 13 required exist only on paper. “The Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation (DSIDC) was supposed to construct 15 CETPs at the cost of Rs 90 crore. They were also supposed to construct a corrosion resistant conveyance system. Nothing has been done. The CETP is ready but not connected,” sources say.

