

# Trail of a City

## Indian Express- Delhi

Posted: Sep 17, 2008 at 2326 hrs IST

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*A new film on Delhi looks at the future, laments the losses*

Filmmaker Krishnendu Bose angles his camera at the Yamuna and sees a vision of the future. “This will be Delhi’s hippest address. On the flood plains of the Yamuna will rise a Manhattan of the future, with undulating series of high-rise buildings and the best condominiums that money can buy,” he says, referring to the state’s urban blueprint. The ribbon of the Yamuna and its 22-km-stretch flood plains form the integral part of the 47-year-old documaker’s new film, *Delhi: Work in Progress*.

Bose’s camera doesn’t stop roving; he travels with it to the other extreme of Delhi’s landscape — at Bhawana, 40 km away on the Haryana border, where evicted slum dwellers have been “dumped”. He takes it to a series of urban planners who paint fantastical pictures of the future, to social experts who sound warning notes and perches him atop flyovers that look out onto depleting tree cover.

“The film is a Dilliwalla’s tribute to the only city he can call home,” says Bose. His shelves are lined with trophies — his last film *Tiger*, the *Death Chronicle* won an award at Montana in May — but *Delhi: Work in Progress*, he stresses, is straight from the heart and documents the Capital’s rapid transformation into “what politicians call a world-class city” and the cost of development. “At Bhawana, I was frightened by the level of anger. Around 2,000 people were moved to the jungle from their slum in Vikaspuri. They lost their jobs, have no sanitation and there’s only darkness at the end of the tunnel,” he says. The anger of the displaced runs through the film — and it espouses Bose’s fear that soon the city could see a social backlash by the displaced. “They form 70 per cent of the population who are getting increasingly frustrated by the day,” he says.

The 38-minute film, made over a period of one year on a budget of Rs 3 lakh that was largely met by the WWF, progresses as a linear narrative on a series of issues ranging from civic values to Delhi’s couldn’t-care-less attitude. For the students who watched the movie, the effect was scary. “*Delhi: Work in Progress* started as a five-minute campaign film on tree-felling in the Capital. I had no idea it would end up as a horror movie instead,” says the filmmaker.