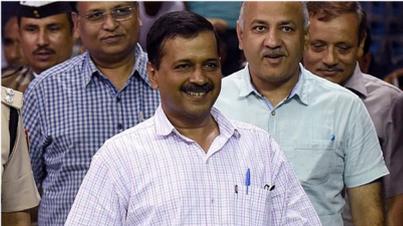


**By Sidharth Mishra**



At the media briefing last week to announce the party candidates for the three Rajya Sabha seats from Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party's number 2 and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia made two very important observations. First that the party contacted 18 politically neutral persons for nomination, and that all refused to bite the bait. Second about ND Gupta, the chartered accountant who is helping AAP to handle its income tax matters, getting the party's boarding pass for passage to Rajya Sabha.

Political parties have a tradition of paying the fee of their saviours before law by way of a nomination to the Rajya Sabha. If one needed evidence, there are cases of advocates Kapil Sibal and RK Anand being sent to Rajya Sabha from Bihar and Jharkhand respectively. In the former's case Lalu Prasad Yadav was the sponsor, whereas in the case of Anand it was veteran tribal leader Shibu Soren.

Sibal over the years has defended Yadav in several of cases of corruption which he is battling, so has Anand in the case of Soren, who like his Bihar counterpart has travelled several times to penitentiary.

Both Yadav and Soren today stand convicted in criminal cases making them unfit to contest elections. God forbid, but one would not be surprised if similar fate visits Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Remember the money laundering case involving the officials of Bank of Baroda in Adarsh Nagar is still to be fully solved. As is said, "the long arms of law" has so far reached Kejriwal's confidant Health Minister Satyander Jain and his shell companies; who else remains to be booked time would say.

Coming back to the recent developments, the sidelining of Kumar Vishwas is not that epochal a moment in the party's short history, as the poet-politician would want us to believe. The

greater shock for those who supported the cause of clean polity was eviction of advocate Prashant Bhushan and political scientists Yogendra Yadav and Anand Kumar. Those looking for a moral message in AAP' selection of Rajya Sabha nominees were probably served by a very short memory.

Three years ago, Delhi Chief Minister ArvindKejriwal had cared little for a 'moral decision' as went for 'political prudence' in March 2015 while getting his two principal detractors – Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav removed from the prestigious Political Affairs Committee of the party.

Despite the projection of despotism at that time, Kejriwal thought the move to be politically prudent as it sent a clear message to the rank and file that the Chief Minister was the supreme leader of the party and not the mere 'convener' of the volunteers. For a man who had in 2015 just entered the office of Chief Minister with the onerous burden of many promises to fulfill, removing a critical ideologue as part of the team was deemed as politically practical.

After expulsion, criticisms from Yadav and Bhushan were projected as those of rivals, thus giving the much needed buffer to the government from a public inquisition. At least that what the ever shrinking AAP leadership thought.

The wise among the learned (in many cases they prove to be gullible) this time around took their lesson from the treatment handed over to Bhushan, Yadav, Anand Kumar, Admiral L Ramdas, Justice Santosh Hegde and not to forget Anna Hazare himself. Thus no wonder likes of ArunShourie, TS Thakur, Raghuram Rajan, Meera Sanyal and several others (18 in all as per Sisodia) refused to accept the offer to piggy ride to the Rajya Sabha on AAP's symbol.

Given his quest for power, Arvind Kejriwal is no less a 'chaturbania' than Mahatma Gandhi. He seems to have taken some great tips from the politics of India's sharpest politician. Following the huge debacle in the Lok Sabha polls in 2014, when infighting broke out, Kejriwal found his way to Tihar jail by not applying for bail in a defamation case.

By doing this he managed to save himself from engaging directly with his detractors. In March 2015, he went in 'solitude' at a naturopathy clinic down south, to return only after the metaphorical hail of brickbats subsided, giving him ample time and space to plan expulsion of

## AAP – The Orchestra Of The Dumb

Written by Administrator

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Bhushan and Yadav. And this time he vacationed in Andamans as Kumar Vishwas' supporters squatted outside party's office braving the chill of severe winter.

As we discuss the latest milestone in the AAP history, we should not forget the origins of the party. In April 2011, when Anna Hazare made government agree to his demands and ended his fast, national Capital's leading English daily had come out with the headline – India Wins Again; which reflected the spirit of involvement of a large number of people with the movement, whose main organizer were Kiran Bedi, Prashant Bhushan and Arvind Kejriwal. Today they have gone their separate ways, leaving no scope to believe that the whole spectacle was ever about cleansing the system but about grabbing power.

For those who had refused to get carried away by overflowing public emotions at Ramlila Grounds in 2011, the frame of future picture was quite lucid. All through the agitation, the anchors of the show profusely complimented the media for being them, and falling in line with them; but also holding threat to those asking uncomfortable questions. "We are reading the newspapers very closely," they would proclaim. They did not do it in their immaturity as on the penultimate day Arvind Kejriwal himself had waved a copy of an English daily to a hysterical mob asking the newspaper to get its facts right or face the music.

Bedi faced the music, Yadav faced the music, and now Kumar Vishwas has faced the music. Kejriwal today conducts a unique orchestra where the best tune is of silence. He waves his cane and expects orchestra members to just sway, making no sound. The party, if there was any, is certainly over.

(The writer Editor & CEO capitalkhabar.in. First published in DBPost, Bhopal)