

Farmers Protest in Delhi Takes a Course Which Denies AAP A Ride

Written by Administrator

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By Sidharth Mishra



Two famous thinkers of the last century had almost common comment to make on politics, which said, "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it whether it exists or not, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedy."

The first person to be attributed this quote is Sir Ernest John Pickstone Benn, a British publisher, writer and political publicist. As a civil servant in the Ministry of Munitions and Reconstruction during the First World War he came to believe in the benefits of state intervention in the economy. However, after the war, in the mid-1920s, he changed his mind and adopted "the principles of undiluted laissez-faire" which is comparable to the ideas of today's free market economy.

The other person to whom this quote is attributed, some say wrongly, is Groucho Marx. Not even a distant relative of philosopher Karl Marx, Julius Henry "Groucho" Marx was an American comedian, actor, writer, stage, film, radio, and television star. He is generally considered to have been a master of quick wit and one of America's greatest comedians.

Now between these two espousers of free market, they probably managed to give one of the best definitions of a kind of politics which repeatedly asks for the intervention of the state. However, these two gentlemen did not perceive the kind of politics which would unfold in the national Capital, to which the agitating farmers are currently laying a siege.

Here we have a situation where the laws of the Central government for a free market in agriculture sector are being challenged by the agitating farmers and they have cordoned the national Capital. On the other hand, the government which administers the city, where the seat of the Central government is situated, is going ahead full steam to plead with the farmers to raid

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the city.

For Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, it's of little consequence that the supplies to the local markets are drying up because of the siege, his bigger concern being to lure the farmers to enhance his electoral stakes in the state of Punjab. It's all well known that the agitating farmers camping at Singhu border mostly come from Punjab.

For Ernest Benn and Groucho Marx such a political model with no accountability of the elected government to govern must have been unheard of. Otherwise these two quick-witted public figures must have formed an opinion on it.

After having blamed the farmers of Punjab for a larger part of the year for choking the national Capital with 'parali' fire, in normal circumstances, the Arvind Kejriwal government should have taken a strict view of their march to the national Capital. However, contrary to the normal perception, the Chief Minister has gone to the farmers with folded hands requesting them to avail of the facilities he has created at the designated area for protest – the Burari grounds.

Ever since the farmers' agitation peaked, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government is working overtime to woo the farmers. First, to show solidarity with the farmers, the Delhi government refused to notify the huge stadiums in Delhi as makeshift jails, forcing the Centre to turn the DDA grounds in Burari into an open jail for the farmers. Following this, Delhi government machinery moved with alacrity to make these farmers 'comfortable' in the Burari ground, and a huge tent city was set using public funds for the purpose.

But as part of their strategy, the farmers have so far stayed put on the borders laying siege of the city and not entering it, turning the tent city into a ghost town. Anxious to register his hospitality with the agitating farmers from Punjab, which goes to polls in 2022, Kejriwal departing from all set norms and protocols, visited protesting farmers at Singhu border on December 7, requesting them to enter the city.

Despite the invitation, the farmers have remained on the borders and a desperate Mr Kejriwal to somehow make an 'impact' with the farmers claimed that he has been put under house arrest by the Centre-controlled Delhi Police following his visit to the Singhu border. A charge which the Delhi Police of course has denied.

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Almost immediately issuing a rebuttal, a senior Delhi Police official said sharing a photo that there was minimal deployment of security personnel at the CM's house and that Kejriwal after Singhu visit had visited a five-star hotel to attend a marriage function.

Going by what Ernest Benn and Groucho Marx defined, Kejriwal this time indeed has 'incorrectly diagnosed' and so far prescribed a 'wrong remedy.' The anti-farms reforms protest of 2020 would be long remembered as a battle for ensuring bread for the coming generation of the farmers. The farmers are here in the capital to fight not just for economic sustenance but also the dignity of the community.

The farmers have so far refused the hospitality of the Centre, with whom they are negotiating, and thus for Kejriwal to feel that they would eat from his hands was misplaced. The lack of clarity within the AAP government on line to be adopted vis-a-vis the farming community was also evident in the notification of the farm law by the Delhi government even as in public they took a pro-farmer line.

While Kejriwal government is indulging in the farm politics, the Delhi Government-run colleges and Delhi Government-funded municipal bodies are waiting with bated breath for the release of salaries. The unpaid salary bills are piling up but this seems to be least of the concerns of the Kejriwal government.

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