

**By Sidharth Mishra**



Marie Antoinette, the queen of France during the Revolution, was known as Madame Deficit. France's financial crisis was blamed on her lavish spending. Often attributed to her, though there is no direct evidence to it, Antoinette on shortage of bread for farmers was believed to have said, "Let them eat cakes." When we place her story in the current state of civic affairs of Delhi, we have a government which deliberates on who gets the Bharat Ratna and lesser Padma awards even as under heavy rains, the roads first turn into drains and then sink causing danger to life and property. Caught in the impregnable traffic jams on the city roads, the poor denizens are greeted by the pictures of a smiling chief minister Arvind Kejriwal wishing well for our Olympic squad. Delhi's contribution to the Indian squad is less than that of a university in Punjab, it's in single digit but the government has splurged multiple crores on the publicity drive. Carrying forward on bread and cake bit, the government has been on a publicity binge for opening sports and skill universities in the national Capital even as the faculty and employees of the Delhi Government-funded Delhi University colleges starve as their salary for past three months remains unpaid.

The ironies are now spilling on the roads. Last weekend the thoroughfare in front of Indian Institute of Technology in the national Capital caved in following the heavy downpour. "Traffic going from Adhchini to IIT has been diverted from Adhchini to Katwaria Sarai after a portion of a road near IIT red light (traffic signal) caved in," the Traffic Police tweeted after the cave in.

The founders of our nation had used the sobriquet of temples of Modern India for the IITs. IIT Delhi is home to an end number of research projects related to road building and road safety and here just outside its gate lies in the unfathomable vacuum in the road. It would not be surprising if Mr Arvind Kejriwal chooses to blame the IIT for producing poor engineers who were still to develop a good road technology.

## Turning a legislative house into a coffee house

Written by Administrator

Monday, 09 August 2021 00:00

---

The soul of much respected road technologist from IIT, Dinesh Mohan, who passed away recently, must be in tremendous pain looking at the criminal neglect of the roads of the national Capital. Mr Kejriwal can blame the BJP-controlled municipal corporations too for the deluge. But the caving in of the public works department (PWD)-built roads and the overflowing sewers of the Delhi Jal Board cannot be blamed on the municipal bodies, they are directly under the Delhi government.

Kejriwal should have had a discussion in the assembly on the civic disorder rather than wasting time on discussing appointment of the new police chief and bestowing the award of Bharat Ratna on Sundarlal Bahuguna. The sudden soft-corner for Bahuguna is related to investing in the upcoming assembly polls in Uttarakhand.

Words of late former Chief Executive Councillor of Delhi, Jag Pravesh Chandra, who was respected across party lines, aptly depict the status of present functioning of Delhi assembly. In 1993, when Delhi was given assembly, Chandra was Leader of Opposition.

The BJP-led state government then was in continuous fight with the Narasimha Rao-led Centre over jurisdictions and would debate inanities. Chandra, who represented the Congress, in a telling comment had said, "If we discuss issues allotted to us, we remain a legislative house otherwise we become a coffee house."

Having been a patron of the legendary Coffee House of Connaught Place, Chandra knew what he was saying. So Mr Kejriwal, let Delhi assembly remain a legislative house not be turned into a coffee house.

(First Published in The Morning Standard/[www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com))