

Delhi's assembly remains a non-legislative Pandemonium

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 29 January 2023 03:46

By Sidharth Mishra



The winter session of Delhi assembly concluded much before the winter ended in the national Capital. The grapevine is that the Lieutenant Governor did not allow the extension of the session as there was no evidence that there was any pending legislative agenda.

Going by the coverage of the Delhi assembly in the newspapers, it was amply clear that the proceedings of the four-day session had less to do with law making and more to do with mud-slinging. In the middle of the four-day session, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took out time to fly to Hyderabad to attend a political rally. Rest of the days were marked by rumpus.

The issue in the nutshell is that it was pointless to have the session. The only justification was the constitutional provision that the state assembly must meet at least once in six months. The sparks from the session have spurred another round of diatribe between the Chief Minister and the Lieutenant Governor with the latter taking umbrage to the Chief Minister calling him names from the floor of the house.

The events of past few years have raised questions about the need to have an elected body of lawmakers. The question mark got bolder ever since Vinay Kumar Saxena moved to the Raj Niwas and unlike his predecessors has started to discharge the duties of the Lieutenant Governor with some energy and focus.

This has understandably caused discomfort for the elected government. But to give due credit to Saxena, he has mostly clamped on the populist agenda of the Kejriwal government which have come at great cost to the exchequer and no value addition to governance.

Delhi's assembly remains a non-legislative Pandemonium

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 29 January 2023 03:46

This friction would only get sharper as and when the elected house of the members of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi start functioning. The MCD in its new avatar would ensure, whosoever may have majority in the house, the command and control of the civic services in the national Capital would remain with the ruling party at the Centre.

The larger question following the move is whether it's now financially and structurally prudent to have a local assembly and an elected state government in the national Capital. During the earlier session, with the Kejriwal government having used the floor of assembly to raise a banner against the Centre on several occasions, Saxena had issued a dictum putting an embargo on the house to ask questions and move motions, resolutions, etc., on subjects constitutionally reserved for the Lieutenant Governor.

When Delhi assembly was re-launched in 1993, having been abandoned in 1956 on the recommendations of the States' Reorganisation Commission, it was pretty clear that the Centre was not to let go its command and control over the national Capital. This was soon realized by Chief Ministers from both BJP (Madanlal Khurana and Sahib Singh Verma) and the Congress (Sheila Dikshit), and they worked to add meaning to the new setup through a dialogue with the Centre.

Unfortunately in the current scenario there is a complete absence of dialogue between the Chief Minister and the Raj Niwas. If there is no working arrangement between the government and the Raj Niwas; and given the overriding powers which the Lieutenant Governor has, what's the utility of having full-fledged legislative assembly? It's a waste of public funds to keep house existing and pay its members handsome wages.

Looking back, one may say that the move in 1993 to give Delhi a legislative house was ill conceived. The States Reorganisation Commission's 1956 resolution to dissolve Delhi assembly should have been upheld for all time to come. The whole of NCT in spirit is a declared Union Territory firmly under the control of the Union Government through the office of the Lieutenant Governor.

(First Published in The Morning Standard)