

## Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated in the Congress party candidates' nomination rally in Alair town.



“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 30):- A grand nomination rally for Congress party municipal councilor candidates was held in Alair town. Telangana State Government Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated as the chief guest in this rally. The rally, which started after special prayers at the Durgamma temple in the town and proceeded to the municipal office, received an overwhelming response from the public. In this event, which saw a massive crowd, Telangana State Government

Whip and Alair MLA Beerla Ailaiah participated and walked in support of the Congress party candidates. Speaking during the rally, Beerla Ailaiah said that the development of towns is in the hands of the people's representatives, and only Congress party councilors can directly understand and solve the problems of the people. He clarified that after the Congress party came to power, they are implementing many welfare schemes for the people, and similarly, they are working with the goal of comprehensive development in the municipalities as well. He said

that they will work towards solving the major problems in Alair town. He stated that the underpass construction was completed only after a people's government came into power in the town, and that they will construct a new municipal office. He said that they will work to ensure that pensions are distributed to the elderly and disabled at the municipal office premises. He also said that Bahadurpet will be made a Gram Panchayat again. He promised to construct a crematorium for the Andhra families residing in the town. Similarly, he stated that the Congress party is moving forward with a clear action plan on issues such as housing construction, drinking water, drainage, concrete roads, street lights, sanitation, strengthening of women's self-help groups, and employment opportunities for the youth. He asserted that the Congress party is the only party that will not betray the people's trust and called upon the people to elect Congress party councilors with a huge majority for continued development. The leaders stated that this nomination rally reflected the strength of the Congress party and the confidence it enjoys among the people. The entire town resonated with Congress flags and slogans, and a large number of party workers and supporters participated enthusiastically, chanting slogans. The leaders expressed confidence that the Congress party is certain to achieve a resounding victory in the upcoming municipal elections.



# BRS Rule was 'Jungle Raj' in Tandur Municipality: MLA Buyyani Manohar Reddy



““Indian Chronicle Tandur,(Jan,30)““ BRS rule in the Tandur municipality was akin to 'Jungle Raj', alleged MLA Buyyani Manohar Reddy. He made the statement while filing nominations for Congress party candidates in the municipal elections. ““Speaking to the media, MLA Manohar Reddy criticized the previous BRS government for neglecting Tandur's development and accused them of misleading the public. He claimed that the Congress government's two-year tenure had brought significant progress to the town. ““MLA challenged former MLA Pilot Rohit Reddy to a debate on the development work done by the Congress and BRS governments. He expressed confidence that the

Congress party would win a majority of seats in the municipal elections and capture the Chairmen post. ““MLA Manohar Reddy emphasized that the Congress party is built on discipline, moral values, and democratic principles. He urged party workers to work towards winning the elections, assuring that the party's candidate for Chairmen would be announced soon. ““The event was attended by Congress party candidates, senior leaders, and workers.



Photo caption only:-““(Mandava Srisailam...Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau...Indian Chronicle...January 30):- Gundegalla Ellayya, who is filing his nomination as an independent candidate in the 14th ward of Bhuvanagiri town. Also seen with him are Beereddy Kondal Reddy and others.



Photo caption only:“(Mandava Srisailam... Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau... Indian Chronicle... January 30):- A scene showing Thummeti Pandu, who is filing his nomination as an independent candidate in the 14th ward of Bhongir town, and others.

## Journalist's son injured in a road accident TWJF State Convener Mamidi Somaiah visits the injured

“(Mandava Srisailam... Hyderabad... Indian Chronicle January 30):-“Telangana



Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) founder president and state convener Mamidi Somaiah visited Harshit Teja, son of TWJF Khammam district leader Samrat Gupta, who was seriously injured in a road accident and is undergoing treatment at Pawan Sai Hospital in Nagole Rock Town Colony, Hyderabad, on Thursday. On this occasion, he inquired about Harshit Teja's health condition and the circumstances of the road accident from Samrat. Harshit Teja, a seventh-grade student at a private school in Siddipet district, was seriously injured in an accident when the car he was traveling in with his relatives was hit by a lorry. In this accident, Harshit Teja's right leg and right arm were fractured. Dr. Srinivas Goud stated that surgery will be performed at Pawan Sai Orthopedic Hospital tomorrow. On this occasion,



Mamidi Somaiah consoled Samrat and his wife and provided them with five thousand rupees for medical expenses.

## TWJF extends support to journalist's family

“- Son of TBJA President Samrat Gupta injured in a road accident“- State Convener Mamidi Somaiah visits the family“(Mandava Srisailam... Hyderabad... Indian Chronicle January 30):- Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) founder president and state convener Mamidi Somaiah visited Harshit Teja, son of TBJA Khammam district president Samrat Gupta, who was seriously injured in a road accident and is undergoing treatment at Pawan Sai Orthopedic Hospital in Nagole Rocktown Colony, Hyderabad, on Thursday. The accident occurred when Harshit Teja, a seventh-grade student at a private school in Siddipet district, was traveling in a car with his uncle when it was hit by a lorry. In this serious accident, his right leg and right arm were fractured. Dr. Srinivas Goud, the doctor treating him at Pawan Sai Orthopedic Hospital, stated that Harshit Teja is currently receiving treatment and will undergo surgery today. On this occasion, Mamidi Somaiah inquired about Harshit Teja's health condition from the doctors and offered solace to Samrat Gupta's family. He also provided financial assistance of Rs. 5,000 for medical expenses and assured them that TWJF will always stand by journalist families.

## Heavy rush marks final day of nomination filing in Kaghaznagar municipality



TAJ KHAN, JOURNALIST SIRPUR CONSTITUENCY, INDIAN CHRONICAL ENGLISH DAILY.

“Taj Khan, Kaghaznagar, January 29 (Indian Chronicle)“The final day for filing nominations for the Kaghaznagar Municipal elections witnessed a heavy rush on Friday, with a large number of candidates submitting their nomination papers. Aspirants from various political parties, including the Indian National Congress, Bharat Rashtra Samithi, Bharatiya Janata Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen and Independent candidates also submitted nominations. As it was the last day of the nomination process, aspirants participated enthusiastically, resulting in brisk activity at the municipal office.

## Nagesh's victory is certain in the Nallagandla division

“Serilingampally, January 30: Residents of several colonies say that if the Congress party high command blesses Nagesh in the Nallagandla division, they will ensure his victory with a huge majority.“In a statement, Nagesh expressed his complete confidence that PAC Chairman Arikepudi Gandhi and MBC Chairman Jerpit Jaipal will secure the B-form for him to contest as the corporator of the Nallagandla division. He said he was very happy that several colonies, slums, caste associations, and many political intellectuals have expressed their solidarity.“He stated that if given an opportunity to serve as the Nallagandla division corporator, he would work with complete dedication and commitment. He mentioned that as the current president of Keshav Nagar, he has already contributed to its development with the support and cooperation of MLA Arikepudi Gandhi.“Nagesh said that if he wins as corporator, he will primarily focus on providing basic amenities such as CC roads, drinking water facilities, and addressing drainage and electricity problems, ensuring that no such issues arise for the people. He assured that he is not seeking the Nallagandla corporator position for selfish reasons, but as a young man, if given the opportunity, he will lead the colonies and slums on the path of development.“He appealed to PAC Chairman Arikepudi Gandhi and MBC Chairman Jerpit Jaipal to place their trust in him and help him secure the B-form for the Nallagandla division in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections.



# Post office employees demand their just demands be addressed

“Indian Chronicle OU January 30: Postmen and multi-tasking staff employees have demanded that the central government immediately resolve the problems of postmen and multi-tasking staff working in post offices across the city. To this end, demanding that their just demands be resolved, leaders of the All



India Postal Employees Union, National Union of Postal Employees, and Bharatiya Postal Employees Association, under the leadership of Secunderabad Division President Ashok, staged a large-scale protest in front of the Hyderabad Headquarters Regional Office located at Osmania University. Employees from all over the city participated in the protest program. Speaking on the occasion, several union leaders alleged that they do not have proper infrastructure in the post offices. They said that they have to face serious difficulties in providing basic facilities like drinking water, toilets and seating facilities for the employees in all delivery centers. They said that due to the lack of adequate staff in the post offices, the work pressure on them has increased severely and they demanded that the shortage of staff



be filled immediately and the workload on them be reduced. They demanded that substitutes be appointed immediately for the posts of leave & vacant postmen and MTS. They demanded that the arrears of wages be paid immediately to the substitutes already working. As per the instructions of the Directorate They demanded that the working hours be strictly implemented. They demanded that the pending issues related to postmen and MTS be resolved immediately. They were angry that they were being forced to work on Sundays even though Sunday was a holiday. They appealed to the central government to immediately stop the unfair work load increase policies. In the wake of their demands not being resolved, they warned that they would hold a large-scale dharna program with 1000 employees from all over Telangana state at Dharna Chowk near Indira Park. PJCA leaders M Madhusudhan Rao, Krishna, Sheikh. Lal Mia, Mohammed, Y Prasad, Srinivasa Chari, Divisional Presidents and Secretaries of the Division participated in the program in large numbers.

# Congress Torch Rally in Secunderabad Against Removal of Gandhi's Name

“Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, January 30:“Under the leadership of the Congress Party, a grand torch rally was organized in the Secunderabad constituency from Namalagundu via



Sitaphalmandi to the Chilakalaguda Gandhi statue. Telangana Congress In-charge Sri Sachin participated as the chief guest in this program, while Congress Party DCC President Deepak John and Contested MLA In-charge Aadam Santosh Kumar presided over the event. In his speech, Sachin strongly criticized the removal of Mahatma Gandhi's name from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), stating that it is an insult to the nation's history and values. Speaking on the occasion, Sachin said: “Will the lives of the poor change if Gandhiji's name is removed? This is not just a name... it is the right of the poor and a guarantee of employment. The Congress Party strongly condemns the Central Government's decision to remove Gandhi's name.” He also demanded the immediate withdrawal of the 'BB Ji – Ream Ji' Act introduced by the BJP government, stating that these laws are anti-people. Addressing the gathering, Aadam Santosh Kumar said: “The ideals of Mahatma Gandhi are the guiding principles of the Congress Party. If the rights of the poor are trampled upon, the Congress Party will not remain silent. It will come onto the streets and fight for the people.” During the rally, pamphlets were distributed to create widespread awareness among the public on these issues. Congress Party leaders and workers, Youth Congress, Women's Congress, and SC/ST Cell leaders participated in large numbers and raised slogans against the Central Government. This torch rally, aimed at awakening public consciousness, concluded successfully. Senior Congress Party leaders and a large number of party workers participated in this program.

# Congress and BRS are two corrupt parties: Dilip Kumar What is the benefit of giving water to those who do not have land: Gali Vinod -

We will contest local, MLA and MP elections together:  
Telangana political allians.



“ Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, January 30 :“Telangana Political Alliance leaders have made it clear that they will contest the upcoming local, MLA and MP elections together in Telangana state. A press conference was held under the auspices of the Telangana Political Alliance at the RLD office in Kavadiguda on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Alliance General Secretary Kapilavai Dilip Kumar criticized that BRS and Congress are two corrupt parties and that BJP is not growing in Telangana and is in a stagnant state. He said that nine parties with similar ideologies have come together to form the Telangana Political Alliance with the aim of putting state power in the hands of the people. He made it clear that they will contest the upcoming local body, MLA and MP elections together as an alliance. He also called for the closure of the corrupt Singareni organization and for the protection of environment, forests and wildlife in Telangana. “They demanded protection of animals. If the Singareni mines are to continue, they suggested taking a clear policy decision, in which 51 percent shares should be given to the workers, 25 percent to the Telangana government and 24 percent to the central government. Telangana Political Alliance Working President Teegala Pradeep Goud said that the alliance has a good chance of winning the upcoming local body elections. He expressed confidence that by including some other parties and associations, they will win more seats in the upcoming MLA and MP elections. Alliance President Professor Gali Vinod Kumar said that funds, water and jobs should be provided to Dalits and Bahujans, who constitute 85 percent of the population in Telangana. “They alleged that it did not benefit only the upper castes, who constitute 15 percent. They questioned what is the benefit of giving water to the landless. They said that there are 28 lakh unemployed people in the state and that the BRS and Congress have so far claimed to have given 60-70 thousand jobs from where they came. They invited the youth into politics with the slogan 'We are one' and said that they would fight together for power through a Telangana political alliance. Leaders of parties like Bahujan Rajyam Party led by Ramavat Lalu Naik, Christian Secular Party led by David Andrew, Aadhar Party led by Dr. Eda Seshagiri Rao, Rajya Dhikara Party (Naragoni) and others participated in the program.



## Football as RLD's municipal election symbol

“ Indian chronicle, Secunderabad, January 30

：“The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) has officially released the 'football' symbol for the candidates contesting on behalf of the party in the upcoming municipal elections in Telangana. The symbol was unveiled by RLD Telangana President Kapilavai Dilip Kumar at the party's office in Hyderabad. Speaking on the occasion, Kapilavai Dilip Kumar said, “The football symbol is a symbol of unity, strength and people's power. As a party that comes from the people, RLD reflects the aspirations of the people in municipal governance. Our aim is to bring honest governance in local bodies.

# Justice Hrishikesh Roy interview: 'A mature govt wouldn't interfere too much with judiciary'

Justice Hrishikesh Roy, who retired from the Supreme Court Friday, was appointed as Gauhati High Court judge in 2006. He was the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court in 2018 before entering the Supreme Court in 2019. Apart from being a member of the Collegium, he was part of many key verdicts, including the 2023 ruling on the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner; and the 9-judge bench ruling that held that not all private property can be a material resource of the community in which he penned a dissent. He spoke to Apurva Vishwanath. Excerpts: I don't think it is fair to say that 34 judges, coming from varied backgrounds, can have all that bonhomie and a backslapping kind of a relationship but there is certainly a relationship of cordiality and mutual respect. The recent gathering that Chief Justice of India Sanjeev Khanna initiated brought a bit of light-heartedness. We travelled together in a bus with our families, and everyone felt that there was a greater bonding.

Did you also discuss business? There was a plan to reiterate or update the judicial code of ethics?

The CJI had a couple of ideas, of course. He wanted to introduce a process of interaction with potential judges in their region rather than calling them to Delhi. We discussed the potential reaffirmation or updating of the ethics code. Not like a formal announcement, but we had discussions about how the institution might address certain situations.

Are you referring to how the Supreme Court intervened in the incident where Allahabad High Court judge made controversial remarks against Muslims in speech?

That is the recent incident. But whenever such incidents happen, there are a few options. Trying to counsel or talk to the individual, transfer, holding back work, the in-house inquiry procedure or impeachment. Even when you transfer, if the government does not want it, there are instances when it has not given effect to such transfers.

So what should the institutional response be in such cases?

I am not sure. I think all our options are soft options and not very effective. We are not equipped to deal with such situations. You see, the Constitution has several safeguards for judges, which are required for us to do our job, free from any external pressures. These safeguards are required but they are also coming in the way of institutional responses. But I must add that this is just one or two judges in over 1000 judges of constitutional courts. Perhaps, we made a mistake in choosing a person but it's not as if everything is bad.

You mentioned transfer as an option. A transfer to the North-East is considered a punishment in judiciary but is that a solution?

Transferring someone as punishment to any of the Northeastern High Courts would offend the people there. They feel insulted if a person with a bad reputation from state X is sent to them. You see, these are much smaller high courts, some with three judges. If one of the three judges is problematic, one-third of the High Court is affected so the impact is much larger. I feel it is better to move them to a larger state where their impact is less.

What difference has live streaming and social media made to the work of the courts?

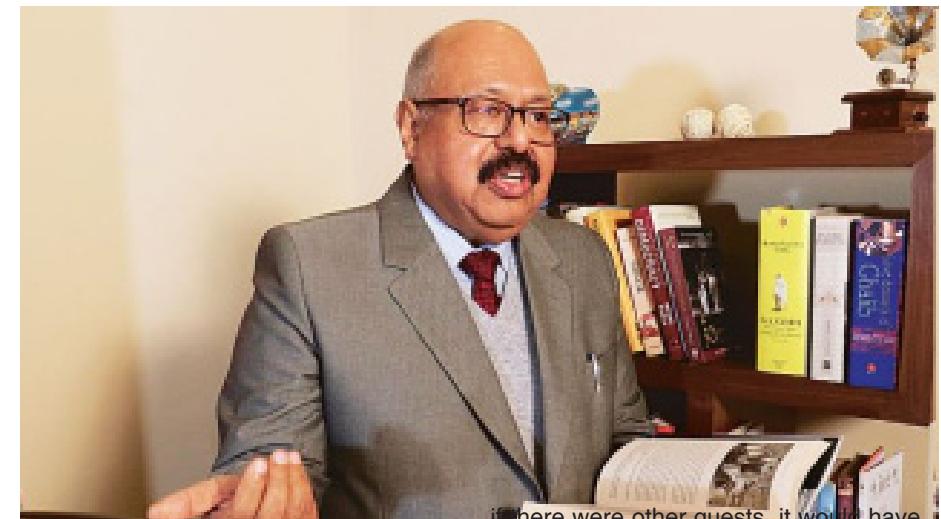
When I was a lawyer in Guwahati, Assam was a disturbed area and because I did a lot of pro bono work, media persons would ask me for details of some important hearings. Eventually, alongside my practice, I also used to write, as a legal correspondent, for the Press Trust of India and The Assam Tribune. Being a lawyer means being sensitive enough to understand that the judges' passing remark does not necessarily reflect the final judgement. Nowadays, with constant focus and live streaming, reports are often limited. They may catch the readers' eye, but have very little to do with the actual proceedings. By the time you are in the Supreme Court, there is some experience. But at lower levels, like in a trial of a high-profile person, it is challenging for less experienced magistrates, not to be swayed by external focus. Story continues below this ad

How does one uphold judicial ethics amid this constant public gaze... temptation to play to the gallery.

Everyone is administered the oath when they become a judge but for those who lead by the oath, these principles are sacrosanct. Why do we administer the oath in a solemn ceremony? So the person knows that they are stepping into a responsible position and cannot behave in a manner unbecoming of a judge. They need to be aware of their responsibilities, not only during court hours, but beyond. Most of us do that but if someone doesn't believe in that, perhaps a mistake was made in choosing such a person. The judging or choosing process may involve scrutiny. You may find someone suitable, but over time it may appear that they were not the right choice. Such mistakes can happen in any system...right now we do not have an effective answer to address such an aberration.

Is it worrying when a High Court judge resigns to join a political party?

It is not just now... any government tends to prefer people on the bench who



are sympathetic to their cause. It's a natural tendency. Judges with their experience can balance into the right thing, but the government must also realise that it is not forever. We are a democratic country. Today, we have a government. Tomorrow, it could be another government. A mature government wouldn't interfere too much with the judiciary. It does not benefit them.

What has changed in the judiciary since the 2018 press conference by four judges?

With hindsight, the four judges, I think, were pushed to the wall and felt that they had to act. I'm sure they thought it through, even if not for long, considered the implications of organising a press conference. Perhaps, one or two judges were more active and others went along. Maybe they wanted to make a statement but there was a battery of media persons and whether that was known to everybody is also a question I have in mind. But, privately, there is a sense that they should have avoided it if they could have.

Since the press conference, there is a bigger spotlight on the office of the CJI and how they deal with other judges...

A Chief Justice, besides being wise about the law, needs to be wise about life. Life is never a level playing field. There are pressures, counter pressures and a constant flux. The dilemma is always there to do something or not to do something. A judge is judged by the way he is conducting himself. The visible part is what you see in court but the other parts are not visible to public eye. You may talk about one judge or two judges but not about the rest. If a judge is not talked about, she is a judge who can be considered to have balanced things well.

What are your views on former CJI DY Chandrachud inviting the Prime Minister for the Ganesh puja?

Obviously, it was a private function and he is a friend of mine. He may be Chief Justice Dhananjay for you, for me, he is Dhan. We are batch mates from law school. I thought it would have been better if it had been avoided. Or, at least,

if there were other guests, it would have not mattered. I am sure nothing of importance was discussed in that meeting. I am very confident about that. That image could have been avoided because the public will interpret it in a certain way.

The government last year issued a circular withdrawing from arbitrations in big public contracts. Does that add to the pendency problem?

When the government aims to make India a hub of arbitration, such memos send contrary signals. Either make a policy decision that you're not interested in arbitration and everyone speaks in one voice... In different forums, the government has expressed a desire to make Delhi or Mumbai hub of arbitration and compete with cities like London or Singapore. I feel this may not reflect the government's complete policy. Because internationally investors want assurance of a quick redressal mechanism which is crucial for attracting big investments.

Will you be taking up a post-retirement job if the government offers one?

I was sounded out a few months ago to gauge my interest and I said no. I have politely declined when someone from the government called me as well. I want to be a private individual after retirement. My immediate task is to find rental accommodation and Delhi is an expensive city so I hope for professional work to sustain myself. Apart from that, I have my calendar marked out for the theatre festival organised by the National School of Drama, which I will go see. When people say they must raise the retirement age, I say oh, no, not for me!

As you retire, what is one thing about the judiciary that worries you and what gives you hope?

The complexity of issues we deal with is only increasing. That is a challenge for the future. What gives me hope is that the younger lot is bright. For many of them, law is a first choice and they want to build their career so they will bring great value.

# What the Economic Survey says: key takeaways from the govt's report on India's economy

The Economic Survey for 2024-25 was tabled by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Friday. The Survey is a report of the state of the Indian economy in the financial year that is coming to a close. It is prepared by the Department of Economic Affairs in the Union Finance Ministry, under the guidance of the Chief Economic Advisor (CEA). This is what the Economic Survey said. The Survey has flagged two main concerns. Introducing the Economic Survey, CEA V Anantha Nageswaran said that the broader global economic environment has become unfavourable and challenging, and global trade and investment have "come to a crawl".

"Global trade dynamics have changed significantly in recent years, shifting from globalisation to rising trade protectionism, accompanied by increased uncertainty," the Survey says. The impact of this shift in global structural forces is reflected in global trade growth, and "signs of secular stagnation in the global economy are beginning to emerge". The second big challenge concerns the dominance of China as the world's manufacturing superpower – a third of all global production happens in China, and it alone manufactures more global output than the next 10 countries put together. However, thanks to global economic fragmentation and upheaval, "the world's modus operandi of outsourcing manufacturing to China pursued vigorously in the globalisation era is poised for a reset," says the Survey. State of Indian economy The Survey contends that the domestic economy remains steady amidst global uncertainties.

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**REAL GDP:** Real Gross Domestic Product, which maps economic activity from the demand side of the economy, in the current financial year (FY25) is pegged at 6.4%; in the coming year (FY26), the Survey expects it to lie between 6.3% and 6.8%. The share of private final consumption expenditure — the money Indians spend in their individual capacity (the consumer demand) — in India's GDP (at current prices) is estimated to increase from 60.3% in FY24 to 61.8% in FY25. "This share is the highest since FY03," says the Survey.

**GVA:** On the supply side, which is mapped by Gross Value Added (GVA), India's growth remains close to the decadal average (Chart). Aggregate GVA surpassed its pre-pandemic trend in the first quarter of FY25, and it now hovers above the trend, the Survey points out.

**INFLATION:** "Headline inflation", the CEA said, "is moderating because of moderating core inflation". Core inflation refers to inflation in goods and services except food and fuel. Story continues below this ad

However, food inflation increased from 7.5% in FY24 to 8.4% in the current financial year, "driven by factors such as supply chain disruptions and vagaries in weather conditions". Antony Cyriac, one of the additional economic advisors present at the CEA's press conference on Friday, agreed that "food inflation is 8%", but argued that "if we remove these 4-5 items (such as vegetables and pulses), it becomes close to the target (of 4%)."

**EMPLOYMENT:** The Survey says

"India's labour market growth in recent years has been supported by post-pandemic recovery and increased formalisation." It quotes the 2023-24 annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) report that shows that all key employment related metrics such as unemployment rate, labour force participation rate and the worker-to-population ratio (WPR) have improved. Survey's recommendations Among the CEA's several recommendations, the most important is the need to deregulate the Indian economy in a way that unleashes economic growth. Story continues below this ad

Asked what his recommendation to the government was to boost consumer demand, the CEA said: "The recommendation...[to] not just...the Union government but to all governments around the country is actually a step to boost employment, income generation, and therefore consumption. The recommendation for deregulation is exactly towards that... By simplifying regulations and by looking at the nuts and bolts of regulation that affect small businesses we are lowering the cost of doing business for them, therefore opening up the space for them to hire more, which will lead to income growth and therefore higher consumption." Referring to the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) formulated by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the Survey states that there is a positive correspondence between business reforms and the level of industrial activity, suggesting the need for deregulation and enterprise-friendly reforms in aspiring and emerging



states.

While the Survey sounds sanguine about India's post-pandemic economic recovery, on the whole, it sounds an alert. "India faces limitations in producing critical goods at the scale and quality required to serve the infrastructure and investment needs of an aspiring economy," says the preface of the Survey. "Getting out of the way" and allowing businesses to focus on their core mission is a significant contribution that governments around the country can make to foster innovation and enhance competitiveness," the CEA has said. For, "business as usual carries a high risk of economic growth stagnation, if not eco-

nomic stagnation." These words contrast starkly with the optimism this same CEA exuded in the Economic Survey in 2023: "2014-2022 is an important period in the economic history of India. The economy underwent a gamut of wide-ranging structural and governance reforms that strengthened the economy's fundamentals by enhancing its overall efficiency... This situation is analogous to the period 1998-2002 when transformative reforms undertaken by the government had lagged growth returns due to temporary shocks in the economy. Once these shocks faded, the structural reforms paid growth dividends from 2005

## This asteroid might collide with Earth in 2032

**Queensland:** On 27 December last year, astronomers using the ATLAS survey telescope in Chile discovered a small asteroid moving away from Earth. Follow up observations have revealed that the asteroid, 2024 YR4, is on a path that might lead to a collision with our planet on 22 December 2032. In other words, the newly-discovered space rock poses a significant impact threat to our planet.

What do we know about 2024 YR4? And what would happen if it did collide with Earth?

As Earth moves around the Sun, it is continually encountering dust and debris that dates back to the birth of the Solar system. The system is littered with such debris, and the meteors and fireballs seen every night are evidence of just how polluted our local neighbourhood is. But most of the debris is far too small to cause problems to life on Earth. There is far more tiny debris out there than larger chunks – so impacts from objects that could imperil life on Earth's surface are much less frequent. The most famous impact came some 66 million years ago. A giant rock from space, at least 10 kilometres in diam-



eter, crashed into Earth – causing a mass extinction that wiped out something like 75% of all species on Earth. Impacts that large are, fortunately, very rare events. Current estimates suggest that objects like the one which killed the dinosaurs only hit Earth every 50 million years or so. Smaller impacts, though, are more common.

The 1-in-77 chance of collision to watch 2024 YR4 has been under close ob-

servation by astronomers for a little over a month. It was discovered just a few days after making a relatively close approach to our planet, and it is now receding into the dark depths of the Solar system. By April, it will be lost to even the world's largest telescopes. The observations carried out over the past month have allowed astronomers to extrapolate the asteroid's motion forward over time, working out its orbit around the Sun.

# Ahead of Delhi Assembly elections, talking politics with a slice of electorate

As the last of shoppers trickle out of Nexus Select CityWalk Mall in Saket past 10 pm, a visibly exhausted Ali, 29, closes the shutter of the small store where he works. Behind the polished glass facade of this mall, one of Delhi's largest retail hubs, are workers like Ali, whose lives are shaped by a very different reality from the shoppers they serve. "I've been working since 1 pm today. No matter who wins in this election, my life will stay the same," says Ali, cranking the shutter's handle in slow motion. On February 5, the national capital will go to the polls. For some like Ali, the Assembly elections are just another date that will "make no difference" to their daily grind, for others, they promise a chance at a better future. With an estimated population of over 2.5 crore, this is set to be a make-or-break election for the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. For the AAP, which was founded in 2012 and first came to power in Delhi in 2013, the past year was full of major setbacks — besides its senior leadership, including Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, getting arrested in the excise policy case, four of its MLAs, including former minister Kailash Gahlot, switched parties since their arrests in other cases. Legal troubles

Even as AAP's rivals — the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is banking on both Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charisma and AAP recent legal troubles, and the Congress, which is betting big on Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to revive its declining fortunes — keep raking up issues like Yamuna's deplorable condition, pollution, political revdis (freebies) and corruption charges against it, there is one question on every mind: will Kejriwal sit on the CM's chair for the fourth consecutive term?

The Indian Express spent a day at Nexus Select CityWalk Mall, a microcosm of the national capital, where the wealthy and the working class coexist, but rarely interact beyond the transactional. Despite attracting crores of visitors annually, at the four-floor shopping complex with over 200 stores, including some of the most expensive international and Indian brands, politics remains a distant concern among its shoppers. Take for example, Radhika Nayyar, 29, an assistant store manager at Ethos Summit, a high-end watch store. Dressed in a black uniform, her eyes keep flitting to the Excel sheet on her laptop. A graduate in Luxury Brand Management from Pearl Academy, she is no stranger to the world of expensive goods. But when it comes to Delhi's political landscape, she says the election is "just another day" for her. "I don't really follow politics. Life is good and I am focused on my career," she admits. Story continues below this ad

Growing up in Model Town, one of Delhi's affluent neighbourhoods, she says she has never had to worry about basic amenities or public services. Though issues with public transport leave her frustrated — like a metro delay earlier in the day causing her to reach work 50 minutes later than usual — these inconveniences have failed to change her outlook on the

polls. "I have never depended on a government scheme," she says with a shrug. Like her, Anu Sharma, 57, a resident of Delhi's Dwarka and a frequent shopper at the mall, reveals her disinterest in the political process. A home-maker who "helps out with her husband's air-conditioner business", she says she "doesn't even have a voter ID card".

To a question on the upcoming elections, she says, "Honestly, I don't follow politics all that much. I think the AAP will lose this time. They just didn't deliver on their promises — at least that's what I have been hearing on the news. My entire neighbourhood is a mess, there's trash everywhere." As she surveys the shelves in a ground-floor boutique, her hands skimming over the neatly folded clothes, Anu says, "The kurti I used to buy for Rs 700 costs Rs 2,000 now." Story continues below this ad

Delhi, one of India's most populated cities, has among the highest per capita incomes in the country — Rs 2.74 lakh, over twice the national average — according to data from the Reserve Bank of India and Delhi Economic Surveys. For Anu, the rising cost of essentials like clothes is a reflection of how inflation has quietly crept into her comfortable life. "My daughter got married recently. The wedding cost us double of what it would have cost a decade ago," she adds. Unlike Anu, her friend Nandu, 55, a software engineer from Uttam Nagar, prefers the "convenience" of online shopping. A supporter of the Bharatiya Janata Party, she says voting is a "social responsibility". "The AAP is lazy and did not fulfil its promises. (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi (of the BJP) is hard-working. The party works hard, campaigns all year and reaches out to people more often," she remarks. Sudhir Messi Sudhir Messi drives toy train at the mallNearby, in the children's play area, Sudhir Messi, 46, who drives a toy train around the mall, sits in the loco pilot's seat in his uniform. As high-end shoppers pass him by, their bags full, their worries distant, something about Anu's remarks hit Sudhir differently today. Story continues below this ad

A resident of Delhi for over two decades, Sudhir, who originally belongs to UP's Bulandshahr, has been working at the mall for two years now. Keeping an eye on the playful chaos of children around him, he says, "I used to vote, but not anymore. I consider it a waste of time now. Though I have not seen any big changes, the free electricity, water and schooling have definitely helped my family." An opportunity for change

For Rajeshwari, 24, who is a part of the mall's housekeeping staff, the upcoming election is an opportunity for change. Hailing from Sangam Vihar, one of Delhi's largest slums, she spends her days scrubbing floors and toilets in the mall. Earning Rs 18,000 a month, she is, at present, the sole breadwinner of her family, which includes four younger siblings. She says her father, a carpenter, is recovering from an injury that has rendered him unable to work.

Glancing at the mall's stores, she says, "I can't even dream of buying anything from



this mall. It's not for people like me. We work here but we don't belong here." Unflinching about her political loyalty, Rajeshwari says she has benefited from AAP's "freebies" — free electricity, water and free travel on city buses for women. Story continues below this ad

Stating that these subsidies have helped ease her family's financial burden, she says with a smile, "I have availed of revdis twice in my life. Vote to AAP ko hi jayega (My vote will only go to the AAP). They have worked a lot for the poor." On what according to her are Delhi's biggest problems, Rajeshwari declares without hesitation, "Pollution has become a big problem." To a question on why she doesn't consider the BJP a viable alternative, she says, "I don't like the BJP as much. The AAP is the best party. The roads in the city are getting better. Even metro connectivity has improved over the past 10 years. Since AAP took charge, corruption in Delhi has reduced." Referring to Modi, she adds, "Until he remains the Prime Minister, there will be inflation in this country and taxes will keep increasing. The BJP can reduce these taxes, but they are not doing that." A resident of Delhi's Kalyanpuri since 1986, he has raised his three children in the city. Reeling from the bite of rising costs in Delhi, he says the tangible benefits of schemes promised by the AAP or the BJP are yet to reach "people like him". He says, "We don't even have potable water. We have to buy two bottles every day. This is how our life has been since the AAP came to power. Our situation is so bad that we can't even afford decent food now. There is no safety in this city either. So many murders and rapes happen here. If you are poor, your life in this city is over. Broken promises Accusing the AAP of "not having done much work over the past 12 years" and holding the BJP "responsible for inflation", he says, "My children study in a government school in Saket. When one of them failed in Class 10, the school refused to keep him on its rolls. There has been no improvement in the state of government schools. This was not the case earlier." Story continues below this ad

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On duty from 6 am to 4 pm, Sureshpal says his daily life is one of exhaustion. Holding out hope for "political change", even if he doesn't see it happening anytime soon, he says, "Rahul Gandhi is the future. He is an educated leader. I understand that the Congress is weak in Delhi, lekin jo girta hai vo utha hai (the one who falls, rises again). With the election around the corner, political promises are taking the center stage. In his political rallies in Delhi, Prime Minister Modi has promised that all existing welfare schemes would be "retained" and "enhanced" under his party. One of the key promises included in his party's manifesto is the introduction of Atal canteens, where "nutritious meals" would be served for just Rs 5 to those living in slum areas. For workers like Sureshpal, this promise offers far too little and comes far too late. "Why are they not promising jobs? We need lower taxes and more education. What will a person like me do if these canteens shut down one day? Give us jobs, not free meals," says Sureshpal, sounding visibly agitated. Across the mall, Deepak Kumar, 40, a housekeeping employee, mops the polished mall floors. Calling himself a housekeeping veteran of "20 years", the Dakshinpuri resident says political promises over the years have left him "weary".

"I used to vote for the Congress earlier, but then I started voting for the AAP. I don't think I will vote this time. The AAP made promises to support the girl child, but nothing happened. The BJP also made empty promises — Modiji said everyone would get lakhs in their accounts (during the 2014 campaign for the Lok Sabha elections), but no one received any money."

Deepak's concerns extend beyond unfulfilled promises. "There is no safety for women across the country under the BJP. Look at the Hathras case (a Dalit girl, 19, was gang-raped by four upper caste men in 2020) — there was no justice for that family. Or the recent rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata. Incidents like these leave us with little faith in these political parties."

Despite his obvious disenchantment, he credits the AAP for improving the quality of Delhi's government schools. "My daughter is studying in a government