

Singareni to set up 1 MW BESS at Mandamarri solar plant

Hyderabad: The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has announced the establishment of a state-of-the-art Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with a capacity of 1 MW/2.5 MWh at its 28 MW Solar Power Plant located in Mandamarri area of Mancherial District. According to company Chairman and Managing Director N Balram, Mars India Antennas and RF Systems, Kanpur had been given the task of setting up a one megawatt capacity battery energy storage system as a pilot project.

The one megawatt battery energy storage system being set up as a pilot project in the 28 MW solar plant in the Mandamarri area would save solar power worth Rs. 13 lakh per month (Rs. 1.6 crore per annum), he said adding that if the pilot project was successful, two more megawatt systems would be set up at the plant site, thereby saving solar power worth about Rs. 40 lakh per month and Rs. 4.8 crore per annum. The electricity generated by the Mandamarri solar plant was

being used for industrial needs in 11 underground mines, 4 open cast mines and other industrial areas in Mandamarri and Srirampur areas, he said, adding that the plant generates an average of 1.34 lakh units of electricity per day, of which the company consumes about 1.14 lakh units and the remaining 20,000 units had to be sent to the Telangana Northern Power Distribution Company (TGNPDCL) through a local substation free of cost. While one megawatt (BESS) costs about Rs. 2.5 crore, the cost of three megawatt plants was estimated to be about Rs. 7.5 crore, he said. Before setting up the solar plant in Mandamarri area, Singareni company used to purchase electricity worth Rs. 13 crore per month from the DISCOMs for the needs of 15 mines in Srirampur and Mandamarri areas, he said, adding that since the installation of the 28 MW solar power plant in 2021, it has been paying only Rs. 9 crore for electricity bills per month. "If this battery energy storage system is successful, another Rs. 4.8 crore will be saved," he said.



Job opportunities in Japan for Engineers and graduates from TOMCOM

TOMCOM has entered into partnerships with various government and private registered agencies in different countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Romania, UAE, Saudi and UK in addition to Gulf countries.

Hyderabad: Telangana Overseas Manpower Company (TOMCOM), which is a registered agency under Department of Labour, Employment, Training and Factories, Telangana State Government, is inviting applications from eligible engineering candidates and graduates who can work in semiconductor and automotive sectors in Japan.

There is a high demand for Semiconductor Engineers and Automotive Technicians in Japan. To apply for such jobs, candidates

must have graduate or engineering in Mechanical, Electrical, Construction Machinery, Automotive Engineering from recognized University. They should also be below or up to 30 years of age. These jobs come with an attractive package and TOMCOM will assist them in facilitating the recruitment process through safe and legal channels of migration, the press release from TOMCOM on Tuesday said. TOMCOM has entered into partnerships with various gov-

ernment and private registered agencies in different countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Romania, UAE, Saudi and UK in addition to Gulf countries, the release said. To assist engineers get jobs in the semiconductor and automotive sector in Japan, the interested persons can send their updated resumes to tomcom.resume@gmail.com. For more details: www.tomcom.telangana.gov.in or call 94400-48590/ 94400-51452.



Rasta-roko staged against ethanol factory in Nirmal



Nirmal: Members of a joint action committee staged a rasta-roko against establishment of an ethanol manufacturing factory, in Dilawarpur mandal centre on Tuesday. Members of the committee, locals and women blocked the traffic, causing inconvenience to motorists for around three hours. They raised slogans against the government for allowing the management to set up the plant in their village. They demanded it to take steps to shift the factory to some other place, stating their farms would be polluted with the advent of the ethanol manufacturer. Traffic moving on Nirmal-Bhainsa road came to a standstill due to the protest. However, police rushed to the spot and held consultations with the agitators. They assured that they would bring the is-

sue to the notice of the government. Following assurance given by the police, the members withdrew their protest and allowed traffic to move on the stretch. Locals are strongly opposing establishment of an ethanol factory at Gundampalli village in Dilawarpur mandal, citing it would pollute their farms and throw their life out of the gear. They have been staging one or the other protest against the factory for over a year. They formed the JAC with an objective to prevent the establishment of the manufacturer.

A Hyderabad-based private organisation is founding an ethanol producing unit on the outskirts of Gundampalli village costing Rs 100 crore. It bought around 60 acres of land to set up the factory.

The birthplace of Polo, the graveyard of the Japanese army

Any history of Manipur must necessarily begin by stating that the present name by which the state is known is a fairly recent coinage. A few decades prior to the 1789 French Revolution, the state was known to its neighbouring kingdoms and regions both in India and Burma by a diversity of names. Numerous 18th century reports by British officers describe it as Mecklay; the Ahoms called it Makeli, the old Assamese name was Moglan, and for the Cacharis it became Magli. For the neighbours to its east, Manipur was called Kasse by the Shans, and Ka-the by the Burmese. The state is a natural labyrinth between hill ranges, with the exception of the Imphal valley that forms a vast plain which has been the stage of civilisation and conflict for millennia. Located at a crossroad between Indo-China and the Indian mainland, Manipur's ethnic pool owes its diversity to the waves of human migrations that have left their traces. It would then be unwise to claim unquestionable autochthony by either the hill tribes or those in the valley. The Meiteis or Maithai are one of the four old tribes living in the plains, converting to Hindu-Vaishnavism just before the arrival of the British in the 18th century. The hill tribes are the Kukis and Nagas, these are appellations names given by outsiders. British accounts such as those by Major James Rennell and the 1886 Gazetteer by Captain E W Dun do not rise above colonial documentary practice of reliance on elite informers, and racist description of regions, customs and tribes.

Prior to the 8th century, references to Manipur can only be found in epic Mahabharata and Puranic literature, both of which cannot be relied on for reconstructing the state's past accurately. The Poireiton Khunthokpa, recognised as being amongst the most ancient Meitei manuscripts, which scholars have dated to the third century CE "describes the colonisation of the valley by a band of people from the 'land of death' under Poireiton. They first established their colony near Langol Hill.... Before the arrival of this colonizing party, the land was inhabited by some people who were no better than the beasts of the forests, who did not know even the use of fire or of any iron implement. It was this band of colonists from the land of death that brought civilization to this valley", writes Jyotirmoy Roy in his seminal work, *The History of Manipur*. Poireiton is a mythological prince and brother of the God of death in Sanahamism, the indigenous religion of Meiteis.

Numismatic evidence takes the recorded history of Imphal valley back to 3rd CE. Around this time, the sport of Sagol Kangjei or Polo finds mention in the royal chronicle Chaitharol-Kumbaba. Coins were also issued by Maranba (1256 A.D.) Khagemba, Paikhomba (1666 A.D.), and Charairongba (1697 A.D.). "Among the coins collected in Manipur by W. Yumjao Singh (historian), four pieces belong to the second century A.D. The discovery of these coins also indicates that there were trade relations between Manipur and India even in that old period. Accounts of Hiuen Tsang and Kamekshya Tantra refer that Manipur was once a part of the kingdom of Kamarupa," Roy wrote. During these centuries there was constant warfare between the plains-dwell-

ing Meiteis and Burmese rulers. Roy wrote: "According to the Shan chronicles, the brother of a king of Mungman who ascended the throne in 1220 CE gained several notable victories in Upper Assam, where he defeated the Chutiyas, as well as the people in Arakan, Manipur and other countries. A section of the Ahoms occupied the northern and eastern hill tracts of upper Burma and western Yunnan, where they formed a group of states. The most important of them, called Mungman, was known to the Manipuris as Pong. The chronicles of Ava and Shan, local literature and customs indicate the invasion of Manipur by the rulers of Ava and Pong. But history has no record of these invasions till the 18th century." It is believed that in 1250 CE a Chinese invasion of Manipur ended in abject defeat, the prisoners were allowed to settle at Susa Kameng, a village on the road to Dimapur. It was these prisoners who introduced silk-weaving, brickwork, and wooden block printing in Manipur. Today, they are a forgotten and disappearing community. However, there is disagreement over the date of this Chinese invasion. Bijoy Panchali, a Hinduised text on Meitei traditions, gives the date as 1564, while TC Hodson, a British political Agent (asst.) who was posted at Imphal stated that the invasion occurred in 1630 CE. From Pamheiba to Gharib Nawaz to Gopal Singh The death of Emperor Aurangzeb (1707) is a significant marker in Indian history as it directly and sometimes indirectly precipitated the rise of small states all over the subcontinent. In the case of Manipur, it coincides with the coronation of Pamheiba (1709) a prince whose parentage and upbringing remains shrouded in myths and legends. One narrative claimed that Pamheiba was brought up by a Naga chief, and that at his coronation he adorned a Naga robe. According to the 18th century text, Bijoy Panchali, Pamheiba's popular title, Gharib Nawaz derives from "Karigumba Nawa", which means the enthronement of a prince who was once lost. Under the influence of his father's religious guru, Shantidas Adhikari, a Vaishnava missionary of fortune, Pamheiba adopted Hindu religion as the state religion leading to conversion of all Meiteis from their indigenous religion Sanahamism to vegetarian Vaishnavism. He also took the Sanskrit name of Gopal Singh, and rechristened the ancient name of the kingdom from Kangleipaak to Manipur. His fifteen successors followed this practice diligently till 1955 when the last Meitei king Bodhchandra Singh passed away. Under Pamheiba, the newly rechristened Manipur state achieved major successes against Burma and also expanded territory. The history of the Kuki-Zo people is harder to reconstruct. The paucity of written records, their fierce independent spirit, and the remoteness of their villages has all meant that besides folk history, what we are left with are a few mentions in Meitei literature, and the very recent British Gazettees. The problem is also exacerbated by the rich diversity of clans and tribes. "The whole of the wild tribes who dwell in the mountain district between Bengal and Burma, Cachar and Manipur and Arrakan, have received this designation. In other cases where a large number of tribes have been classed together (Abors, Singphos, Nagas), the differences between tribes separated



socially and geographically from one another have, since the imposition of the name, been discovered to be so great as to suggest doubts as to the advisability of attempting any such wide generic classification; but in the case of the Kukis, all the tribes (with indeed the exception of the Pois) have so many common grounds of affinity, that the classification seems to have been, however accidental, correct", notes the 1886 Gazetteer, by Captain E W Dun. According to the 1881 Census, there were roughly 30,000 Kukis in Manipur. With increasing Vaishnavisation of the kingdom and gradually increasing contestation over the rich resources of the valley and hills, as well British attempts to subjugate them, the Kukis organised a major rebellion between 1917 and 1919. The rebel-

lion ended with the death of more than a hundred on the Kuki side and the destruction of more than 120 Kuki villages and their subjugation. But this also laid the foundation of a modern Kuki nationalism as it brought together various clans against a common enemy. P S Haokip's book on Kuki nationalism, 'Zale'n-Gam, The Kuki Nation', records a war song from that time: "Phai chungnung kol kimvel'e (From all around the valley of Manipur) Kolmang tolkon (From beyond the horizon of Burma) Ikal lhangphai thin eisem gom me, Phai thin sem gome (The valley storm brought us together) Lheppon bang kitho tin (Let us stack together (stand together) like the folded clothes) Nam cham khat in vabang pao tadite (Like the birds, let us speak (fight) as one free nation.)"

Smoking alters throat microbiota and worsens flu risk, study finds

New Delhi: Smoking cigarettes can cause changes in throat microbiota and worsen influenza A virus infection, finds a study. Smoking has long been known as unhealthy. It is known to lead to chronic pulmonary disease and has also been associated with increased risk for influenza-related illness, among a host of other conditions.

More recently, scientists demonstrated a link between cigarette smoke and a disordering of the oropharyngeal microbiota composition. However, this association has not been clear. The soft palate, side and back walls of the throat, tonsils, and the back of the tongue make up the oropharynx. To decode, researchers from the University of Bern, Switzerland led a mice study. They showed that gut and oropharyngeal microbiota are altered by chronic cigarette exposure in mice. Markus Hilty, Associate Professor at the Institute for Infectious Diseases, at the varsity said that smoking alone does not impact respiratory disease. "The smoker's microbiota may also impact respiratory disease and/or infection. In our case, it impacts viral infection," said



Hilty. In the study, the team exposed mice to cigarette smoke, and then cohoused them with air-exposed mice (control) and germ-free mice. The experiment allowed the transfer of the microbiota from donor mice to germ-free mice. The results, published in *mSystems*, a journal of the American Society for Microbiology, showed that the original germ-free mice were colonised either with bacteria from a smoke-exposed or air-exposed mouse. Further, the team infected the recipient mice with influenza A virus and monitored the disease course. They found that the original germ-free mice who received bacteria from smoke-exposed mice had a more severe disease course, which was measured by increased weight loss.

Constitution Day Promotes Respect And Awareness Of Constitutional Values: Haryana CM



Chandigarh (JAG MOHAN THAKEN), November 26 – Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini on Tuesday, while extending greetings for Constitution Day and the Amrit Mahotsav of the Constitution, said that November 26 is a proud day for every citizen. On this day in 1949, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution of India. Constitution Day serves to promote respect and awareness of constitutional values among citizens, he said. The Chief Minister was attending the State-Level Amrit Mahotsav Celebrations organised on Constitution Day at Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. On this occasion, he also inaugurated an exhibition organized by the Information, Public Relations, Languages, and Culture Department.

Addressing the gathering the Chief Minister said that the state government is actively advancing democratic principles through its progressive social and economic policies, guided by the core values of the Constitution. Haryana is committed to realizing the vision of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism and Antyodaya while adhering to the philosophy of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, and Sabka Vishwas', said Nayab Singh Saini. The Chief Minister paid homage to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and other visionaries who played a key role in drafting and framing the Constitution of India. While emphasizing the significance of the 'We the People' in the Preamble of the Constitution, he said that this phrase is a testament to Unity and Integrity. He said that these three words represent India's collective voice, a pledge of unity and integrity, and a manifestation of people's trust in the Republic, which is known as the 'Mother of Democracy.'

The Chief Minister said that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's historic decision to abrogate Articles 370 and 35A has fulfilled the dream of an Akhand Bharat. He said that this move is a true tribute to the architects of the Constitution, including Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee. The abrogation symbol-

izes the realization of 'One Nation, One Constitution, One Flag, and One Leader,' said Saini. The Chief Minister said that the Constitution has woven a nation of diverse cultures into a thread of unity. India's ancient tradition of self-governance was realized through the adoption of the Constitution in 1949. It established a republic founded on equality, justice, and high ideals while ensuring freedom of thought and equal opportunities for all.

C M Saini called on institutions and individuals to reaffirm their commitment to the Constitution, stating that the celebration of Constitution Day began in 2015 under the leadership of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, marking the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He said that Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar made a significant contribution to the challenging task of drafting the Constitution. While the Constitution gives us rights, it also emphasizes the importance of duties. We must strike a balance between duties and rights, he added.

The Chief Minister said that Mahatma Gandhi used to say that our rights are essentially our duties, which we must fulfil with true honesty and dedication. Today, in the Amrit Mahotsav of the Constitution, this principle of Gandhi Ji is becoming a pledge for the nation. He urged everyone to introspect and ensure adherence to constitutional values and expectations. The Constitution's Amrit Mahotsav provides an opportunity to reflect, understand, and adopt its values in daily life, demonstrating true citizenship and reverence for the Constitution, said the Chief Minister. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also felicitated the students who won various competitions held during the celebrations of Constitution Day. Apart from this, the Chief Minister also made the attendees present in the function read out the Preamble of Constitution. Speaking on the occasion, Kashmiri Lal who was the chief speaker during the event said that India's Constitution is the world's largest written constitution. In India, whether a tribal person or a wealthy in-

dividual, the value of their vote is the same, and this is only because of the Constitution. The constitutions of 17 countries were framed and drafted after India's Constitution, and all of them have faced constitutional difficulties multiple times, but only India's Constitution has not faced such a difficulty. He said that in 2015, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi decided to observe Constitution Day for the first time, and since then, this day has been celebrated every year. He urged that on this day, students should take an oath to protect the Constitution and the country. Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor, Kurukshetra University, Professor Som Nath Sachdeva, said that the Indian Constitution is not only the foundation of governance but also a unique symbol of India's cultural, historical, mythological heritage, and artistic legacy. He said that it is not just a document, but the soul of our nation. It symbolizes the fundamental rights and duties that grant every citizen the rights to freedom, equality, and justice. It is the largest written constitution in the world, said Prof. Som Nath Sachdeva.

Fire breaks out at plastic bag manufacturing company in Jeedimetla



Hyderabad: A massive fire broke out at a plastic bag manufacturing company at Jeedimetla on Tuesday afternoon. The workers in the company, who noticed the fire at around 12 noon, quickly managed to vacate the premises. On being alerted, the fire tenders reached the spot and started fire fighting operations. Huge smoke was billowing out from the manufacturing unit following the fire

incident. The fire personnel are taking all steps to prevent the spread of the fire into neighboring establishments, authorities said. The fire officials said that they can as-

certain the reasons only after inspecting the building. The police had cordoned off the area to prevent people from crowding the place and causing hindrance in the fire fighting operation.

SP Rohith Raju warns officials against delay in crime investigation

Kothagudem: Delay in investigation of cases would not be tolerated and disciplinary action would be taken against negligent officers, warned Superintendent of Police, B Rohith Raju. Speaking at a monthly crime

review meeting here on Tuesday he asked all police officers to act responsibly while suggesting that criminals should be punished through quality of investigation and justice should be delivered to the affected persons.

HCL Group Brings Cyclists Together to Celebrate Fitness, Heritage, and Sustainability in Hyd

HCL Group organized two engaging cycling events in Hyderabad as a precursor to the highly anticipated HCL Cyclothon, scheduled for December 15. These events aimed to celebrate the spirit of fitness, environmental sustainability, and the city's rich heritage. Hyderabad, known as the City of the Nizams, was chosen as the host for HCL Cyclothon due to its thriving cycling culture and its commitment to fostering cycling-friendly infrastructure, including extensive dedicated cycling tracks.

The city's growing passion for cycling provided the ideal backdrop to connect with a vibrant cyclist community and advocate for sustainable urban transportation.

Cyclists enthusiastically participated in the #ChangeYourGear Rides, held on the mornings of November 10 and 24. The rides started from multiple locations across Hyderabad, including Peddlers Point in Gachibowli, HBC Station near Sanjeevaiah Park, Necklace Road, and The Bike Affair in Kondapur. Participants converged at the iconic Charminar, where they enjoyed chai and a photo session before proceeding to Sanjeevaiah Park for breakfast.

Additionally, the "Know the History of Hyderabad on a Cycle" ride on 10th November offered participants a unique experience of exploring historical landmarks, including the iconic Golkonda Fort, while promoting environmental consciousness.

The rides saw enthusiastic participation from cycling groups and recreational riders,



ers, bringing the community together to embrace a healthier lifestyle and raise awareness about sustainable living. Through these

events, HCL continues to foster community engagement and inspire positive environmental action. The registration for HCL

Cyclothon Hyderabad (15th December 2024) is open till November 30 at www.hclcyclothon.com

Hyderabad Swimming Championship Finishes Strong, Showcasing Young Talent



The Hyderabad Swimming Championship 2024, organized by the ORCA Aquatic Championship, concluded successfully at Glendale Academy, Suncity, Hyderabad. The event attracted enthusiastic young swimmers from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, representing esteemed schools and sports clubs including Glendale Academy International, Zion Sports, ORCA Aquatic Championship, Sadana Infinity Inter-

national, Ocrich, and Gachibowli Swimming Academy. Swimmers from Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Khammam showcased their exceptional skills in a variety of swimming events, marking the championship as a resounding success.

Winners of the championship included Amelia, Tuhina, Niara, Deeksha, Pricila, Ridhaan Jaswal, Agastiya, Vakul, Manan Chandra, Iqra, Avisha R., Pavika, Yashika,

Vihaan, Samik, Pranav, Delisha, and Chanisya. These talented athletes excelled in a range of competitions including freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, butterfly, as well as relay and kickboard races. The championship adhered to the strict regulations of FINA and SFI, ensuring a professional and equitable platform for all participating swimmers.

The event was organized by a dedicated team of experienced swimmers and certified life-savers from prestigious institutions such as the Rashtriya Life Saving Society (India), Sports Authority of India, and NIS (National Institute of Sports). It served as an excellent platform to nurture young talent and promote lifelong dedication to health and fit-

ness through swimming. Medals and certificates were awarded to the winning participants, while all early registrants received participation certificates and refreshments. The medals were presented by guest of honour Vinay Goud, Director of Aarush Group, along with Ajit, D. Shiva Yadav, B. Prabhakar, and Dayakar. The ORCA Aquatic Championship team extends its heartfelt gratitude to the participating schools, academies, clubs, and supporters for their contributions in making the championship a celebration of sportsmanship, health, and fitness. This year's event truly highlighted the vibrant swimming talent in the region and underscored the power of sports to inspire and unite communities.

KTR flays Sircilla Collector for acting as Congress worker

Rajanna-Sircilla: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Tuesday came down heavily on District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha for asking BRS activists to join the Congress party. Stating that the Collector was working as a Congress party worker, Rama Rao asked the party workers not to be afraid of such people and made it clear that Congress leaders including Chief Minister A

Revanth Reddy could do nothing to the BRS. Collectors and other officers, who were working as Congress activists, would be taught a befitting lesson once the BRS returned to power, he said. "I will take that responsibility. I will definitely do that," he said, while participating in the Deeksha Divas preparatory meeting held in the Sircilla Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday.

"SANGAM 2024 Delights with Cultural Performances and Inspiring Messages at The Creek Planet Schools"

The annual program "SANGAM" for Sr. Seeds Primary Campus, part of The Creek Planet Schools, located at Vediri Township, HMT Colony, Miyapur, and SEEDS Arion Campus at Srivani Nagar, Ameenpur, was held at Vishwanaadha Gardens, Miyapur, Hyderabad, marking a resounding success. The event saw the participation of esteemed guests, including Pandu Ranga Chary (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Narendra Prasad Edpuganti (Founder & Managing Director), and Dr. Jayashree Nair (Academic Head).

The highlight of the day was the address by chief guest S. Ashok Chakravarthy (Deputy Collector, RDO Narayankhed) and Guest of Honor Ms. Renu Chamarthy (Storyteller). Their inspiring speeches resonated with students, teachers, and parents alike, emphasizing the importance of pursuing excellence and following one's dreams. An impressive display of talent unfolded as students took the stage with cultural performances themed "Adventures in Wonderland." The audience was captivated by the students' dances, skits, and musical presentations, showcasing their creativity and hard work. The meticulously planned performances were a testament to the collaboration between students and teachers, reflecting an extraordinary level of commitment. The annual report delivered by school heads Ms. Garima Kumar and Ms. Nagavalli highlighted the significant growth and achievements of both campuses, leaving parents inspired and appreciative of the dedication shown by educators and students alike. Overall, SANGAM 2024 fostered a vibrant atmosphere of celebration, creativity, and community, making



the event a truly memorable experience. With joy and inspiration in the air, the occasion

brought together parents, teachers, and students to celebrate their collective achieve-

ments and the ongoing spirit of growth at The Creek Planet Schools.

An elusive social media mirage, and an equally unbothered Elon Musk

The past few days, felt akin to an unpleasant recall. Unpleasant, because of the futility and a resounding failure of the mission humanity set out to complete after Elon Musk took over Twitter (now it's called X, keep up) a couple of years earlier. Basically, BlueSky has claimed that since the US election results were announced, millions of users have signed up for the platform. That, they first said, took that social media platform's footprint to about 15 million users. The number, then claimed to be 20 million, a few days ago.. Cue headlines such as "users are fleeing Elon Musk's X..." and that "X is haemorrhaging users...". I've seen that before.

It didn't dent Twitter any more than Elon Musk cared then. It wouldn't dent X any more than Elon Musk could care now. The reality is, X is still far ahead, if you're to look at the bigger picture beyond just the numbers. Last year, Twitter had around 250 million daily active users (DAUs), and at that point, Musk had claimed 1 billion mark was very much possible a year later. To get an official take on the numbers as they are now, is as plausible as expecting a 99 AQI day in Delhi NCR in the month of November. However, market intelligence firm Sensor Tower indicates that's dropped to 162 million DAUs as on Election Day.

Numbers may illustrate a trend, but Musk didn't get into President-elect Donald Trump's circle of trust for nothing. The platform, which has long been alleged to have leaned more and more to pander to right-wing political thought (algorithmic preference, content moderation and so on) since the billionaire took over, has actually doubled down on that perception to chart its course. It hasn't felt the need to be apologetic, even for optics. For every celebrity and advertiser that's left Twitter and X in previous months, gone with them are followers who never really fit into Musk's idea of a town-square anyway. His political positioning, mostly disagreeable to anyone with a smidgen of common sense and humanity, in recent months makes that clear.

X always intended for many, many users to leave, and build with ones that remained. Many seem to allege that Musk bought Twitter then, to weaponise the potent social media platform as a political tool. Likely that's what he always wanted to do. Perhaps, he wanted to place his bets, with a longer view on a broader perspective including his businesses interests, policies shaping up and the political undertones as they evolved. Just between us, it was never a good idea to not have Tesla at an electric vehicle summit in 2021. I mean, who came up with that? Think

about it. I say this as someone who doesn't always agree with Musk's views about many a thing (not that it matters to the billionaire).

Is it likely that the ones who wailed the most and insisted they can now instead be found on one of Twitter's alternatives, were in a significant minority? Think about it — if they weren't, Threads, BlueSky, Mastodon and all these other names that were poised to be "the next Twitter" would have actually become "the next Twitter". As for advertisers, Musk may not say as much, but he doesn't care if a set of corporates don't advertise on the platform anymore. He wouldn't say "go f--- yourself" otherwise. Most of us took the literal meaning of that statement. The key always was, what's between the lines. Meta's Threads was perhaps best placed to provide us with an X alternative. It still is, with around 175 million monthly active users and counting. But that's really the audience, which is happier on a platform that isn't exactly focused on news. Political opinion, particularly the polarising ones, aren't given as much algorithmic priority on Threads. It is Meta's conscious decision, at least for now, to keep Threads' timeline a happier place and not exactly have news and news-based opinions flood user feeds. BlueSky and everyone else who once held aspirations of being the next Twitter, remain

far behind, in terms of ease of use. That has a bearing on numbers.

One of the reasons, as I have illustrated, is the volume of opinions against X's content trajectory doesn't match actual users exiting. They may crib and wail, but they hang on. And that leads me to my other point, habit. It is curated, much like WhatsApp is to messaging. Many an attempt were made in recent years to find the next WhatsApp, and Signal as well as Telegram were believed to be that. They never were, and will never be. It is nigh impossible to change the habits of millions of users.

I am not saying that BlueSky, Mastodon and others don't have a place in this world. They all do. Much like how a Realme and Nothing have a right for space in a broader ecosystem which otherwise has (arguably) much better Android smartphone choices from the likes of Vivo, OnePlus and Samsung. However, with little chance of ever sitting at the high table. The search for that Twitter alternative, was flawed from the beginning. It now, must stop.

Vishal Mathur is the technology editor for HT. Tech Tonic is a weekly column that looks at the impact of personal technology on the way we live, and vice-versa. The views expressed are personal.

A rinderpest outbreak devastated the gaur population of Mudumalai in 1968

In 1968, a deadly outbreak of rinderpest, a highly contagious viral disease, also known as cattle plague, swept through the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary in Tamil Nadu. The outbreak devastated the sanctuary's gaur population, killing dozens of these majestic wild cattle native to the Western Ghats. Rinderpest primarily affects cattle, buffaloes, and certain wild ruminants. It spreads rapidly through direct contact with infected animals and contaminated environments. It is marked by symptoms such as high fever, nasal discharge, and diarrhoea. By the summer of 1968, rinderpest started affecting the wildlife of Mudumalai, which was home to large populations of gaurs, elephants, and other species. The disease was particularly devastating to the wild herbivores of the sanctuary. The outbreak quickly worsened from isolated cases to an epidemic that killed over 100 buffaloes and at least 40 gaurs by mid-August. Steady spread

As D. Pattabiraman, a retired Director of Animal Husbandry, explained in *The Hindu* in 1965, rinderpest is a disease that spreads in a steady, gradual manner, with death occurring over two to three weeks. Its impact on livestock was so severe that it led to the formation of the India Cattle Plague Commission as early as 1869, tasked with finding ways to protect the livestock. By the early 20th Century, the rinderpest mortality figures were staggering. Pattabiraman noted that over 1,50,000 head of cattle succumbed to the disease during 1908-1909, and similar figures were reported during 1918-1919 and 1928-1929. The disease's cyclical nature — flaring up roughly every decade — showed its potential to wreak havoc on the cattle population. However, significant progress was made in controlling rinderpest after compulsory inoculation was introduced in 1929. This method became widely accepted after people witnessed its success in preventing the disease, despite the difficulty in securing the vaccines. Yet, as the Mudumalai outbreak in 1968 demonstrated, the challenge remained particularly acute for wild ruminants. While domestic cattle populations had been better protected, thanks to government-led vaccination programmes, wild populations like the gaurs in Mudumalai were not so fortunate. In fact, Pattabiraman's report highlighted that rinderpest remained a persistent threat to both domestic and wild herds in India, with a devastating effect in unprotected areas. M. Krishnan's concerns for M. Krishnan, one of India's leading naturalists, the outbreak was deeply troubling. He had spent years observing the wildlife of Mudumalai and was familiar with the sanctuary's ecosystem. He had long called for stronger measures to manage wildlife habitats, especially measures against the threat posed by diseases that could spread from domestic animals to wildlife. His concerns about the dangers posed by domestic cattle to wild animals were recorded by historian Ramachandra Guha in his book *Speaking with Nature: The Origins of Indian Environmentalism*. In his profile of Krishnan, Guha captured the naturalist's worries about how the presence of domestic cattle — particularly in sanctuaries like Mudumalai — posed a serious threat to wild herbivores, exposing them to devastating diseases. Krishnan had first raised the alarm

in 1966 when the foot-and-mouth disease spread from cattle to wild herbivores in the sanctuary. He urged the authorities to ban cattle from the preserve. His advice, however, went unheeded, and the rinderpest outbreak in 1968 served as a painful vindication of his concerns. In the aftermath, Krishnan lamented the tragic loss of the gaurs, a species he had long admired, and noted how domestic cattle not only served as disease vectors but also competed with wild herbivores for resources. He emphasised the need for stricter controls on cattle in protected areas. His observations contributed to a broader understanding of the challenges faced by wildlife sanctuaries in India. The outbreak had severe consequences not only for the gaurs but also for the entire ecosystem of Mudumalai. As large herbivores, gaurs play a vital role in shaping the vegetation of the forest. By browsing on grasses and shrubs, they help to maintain the landscape and prevent the overgrowth of certain plants. Their decline disrupted the food chain, affecting smaller herbivores that relied on similar vegetation. With fewer gaurs, certain types of grasses flourished, altering the plant community and further impacting the balance of the sanctuary's ecosystem. The decline of this important species also affected the predators and scav-



engers that relied on gaurs as prey. Response The wildlife officers of Mudumalai worked to contain the spread of the disease. Forest Department workers searched for carcasses and disposed them of quickly to prevent further contamination. However, in the absence of the resources or scientific knowledge to combat rinderpest in wild animals, their efforts were limited. As E.R.C. Davidar, naturalist and wildlife conservationist, noted in *The Hindu* on November 10, 1968, the outbreak exposed the

serious weaknesses in India's wildlife management policies. He said that while more sanctuaries were being created, few had the proper infrastructure or scientific support to manage emergencies. He advocated for a more proactive approach towards wildlife management, organised responses to epidemics, and better integration of veterinary care for wild species. He also highlighted the importance of creating stronger boundaries for sanctuaries to prevent the spread of diseases from domestic animals.

Battle Of The Bulge: Are semaglutides the answer?

While each of us should aim to be fit as a fiddle, how we achieve our fitness goals is the real question. With Ozempic and Wegovy becoming a global rage, here's what experts have to say about using semaglutides for weight loss. Formulated to manage blood sugar levels in type-2 diabetics, Ozempic is the new buzzword. It is a semaglutide subcutaneous injection that has caught the fancy of celebs and influencers for its rapid weight-loss properties.

Hyderabad: In the winter of 1944, Nazi Germany unleashed its final major offensive to stop the Allied forces from using the strategic Belgian port of Antwerp and to split enemy lines. It was called The Battle of The Bulge — a key turning point in World War II. Today, our world is living through two major wars — Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza-Lebanon. And, it is on the brink of a full-blown escalation that many fear may manifest in World War III. While top diplomats, leaders of State and geopolitical analysts are yet again in a huddle to save humankind, this time from ballistic missiles and drones, another 'Battle of The Bulge' is ensuing far, far away from the frontlines — in the glistening urban landscapes where vanity is up against wellness and cosmetic against health in the race to look like a million bucks.

With every passing day, as lifestyle changes for the worse — blame it on technology, sedentary work culture, lack of discipline or arrogance — our world is spending every waking moment fighting OBESITY. According to a recent study published in *Lancet*, 70 per cent of India's urban population is obese, which puts the country in the midst

of a global obesity crisis. More than one billion people worldwide are obese, which makes them prone to several diseases such as heart ailments, diabetes and cancer, the study states. While each of us should aim to be fit as a fiddle, how we achieve our fitness goals is the real question. Today, many believe that the wait to rid ourselves of weight has ended. Enter Ozempic and Wegovy!

Formulated to manage blood sugar levels in type-2 diabetics, Ozempic is the new buzzword. It is a semaglutide subcutaneous injection that has caught the fancy of celebs and influencers for its rapid weight-loss properties. With many in the West — notably Elon Musk and Oprah Winfrey — drastically shedding those pounds due to the injectable, it's being touted as a 'miracle drug', a 'gamechanger'. The drug has become an internet sensation; people are jabbing themselves with it even if it is just to lose those last few extra kilos. Drugs with semaglutide as their active ingredient trick your brain into making you feel full. They mimic the role of Glucagon-like Peptide-1 (GLP-1), which is a hormone that is secreted when we eat. It signals the body that there's food entering and to get ready to convert the nutrients into energy. Drugs like Ozempic do just that — they suppress appetite and induce satiety.

The success of Ozempic in terms of attaining weight loss has been such that drug maker Novo Nordisk came out with Wegovy — another semaglutide injection that it markets purely as a weight-loss drug. While these two are not yet available in India, people either import them or procure them from the grey market, wherein they run the

risk of using counterfeit products. "Ozempic, which is a Type-2 diabetes medicine and also used off-label for weight loss, and Wegovy, the first USFDA-approved medicine for weight management, are both semaglutide injection products from Novo Nordisk. These may be imported for personal use by submitting an application in Form 12A to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and obtaining permission in Form 12B from the CDSCO. However, the instances of Ozempic injections being sold in the grey market were detected by the Drugs Control Administration, Telangana. Stocks of Ozempic were seized at a medical shop in Nampally, Asha Medical Hall, in September 2023. A case was filed against the offenders," says VB Kamalasan Reddy, Director General of Telangana State Drugs Control Administration (TSDCA).

These come at a steep price. A month's supply can set you back by over Rs 80,000, according to reports. For example, Ozempic has to be taken weekly once, with each dose, if imported, costing around Rs 20,000. Meanwhile, manufacturer Novo Nordisk sells the same semaglutide medication for type-2 diabetics in a pill form in the country under the brand name Rybelsus, which needs to be taken every day. A Rybelsus strip of 10 costs around Rs 3,000, each pill costing Rs 300. But experts warn that semaglutides are not for all. "All drugs come with side effects. Weight loss is a side effect of Ozempic, which has gained prominence. If one has to take a weight loss drug, it has to be done under strict medical supervision by a doctor.

After a health emergency, air pollution foretells an economic one

In his 36 years as a thoracic surgeon, Dr Arvind Kumar has literally heard and opened tens of thousands of chests. According to him, the human lung, a pristine pink at birth, tells the tale of each breath taken over a lifetime. "For years, I could trace the pattern of urban pollution on lung tissue as black deposits — a few spots here, larger stains there. Now it's everywhere," Dr Kumar said from his office in Medanta Medicity Hospital, Gurugram. He has been disturbed by the harrowing effects of air pollution on lungs, and not just in people with lung diseases or the elderly. "The lungs of teenagers now look like the lungs of lifelong smokers. Pollution isn't just in our cities — it's inside us." This transformation of chest health is an invisible epidemic affecting millions across India, now underscored by the findings in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Emissions Gap and Adaptation Gap reports for 2024. Emissions are increasing worldwide but in few places as much as in India, more than 6% from last year. The data is unequivocal: pollution is now more than an environmental issue. It's a national health emergency. India's poor air quality has been silently affecting communities for decades, with lethal results. "Air pollution is the biggest environmental risk to health, even the leading cause of premature death in India," Dr Pallavi Pant of the Health Effects Institute said.

According to her research, nearly 2 million lives were cut short in India in 2021 alone due to pollution-related diseases. Among the most affected are pregnant women, children, the elderly, and those already facing health challenges. "For these populations, the risk of respiratory infections, impaired lung function, and even cardiovascular conditions due to pollution is devastating and far-reaching," she said. Exposure to air pollution can permanently impair lung development, leading to chronic respiratory issues and asthma in children. "These aren't just minor inconveniences," according to Dr Pant. "This is a fundamental health crisis where children grow up with a lifetime of diminished health and quality of life." To her, the real tragedy is that risks fall heaviest on the most vulnerable. "Those with fewer resources are the hardest hit. They often live closest to pollution sources and lack the means to protect themselves. This is a crisis of inequality as much as [of] health."

Dr Soumya Swaminathan, former chief scientist at the World Health Organisation (WHO) and chairperson of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, said, "The impacts of poor air quality are systemic. High pollution levels are linked to non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, and stroke. We're talking about lifelong health impairments that are often invisible but devastating." According to her, early and prolonged exposure to pollutants during critical periods like pregnancy and early childhood can predispose individuals to lifelong illnesses. "Children are growing up with a fundamentally compromised baseline for health," she added.

India launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in 2019 to reduce particulate matter pollution by 20-30% by 2024, before adjusting the target to a 40% reduc-

tion by 2026. According to experts, the NCAP has significant room for improvement. "The NCAP has become, for many, a symbol of intent without effective action," Dr Kumar said. "We have policies but where we're faltering is in ground-level implementation." Dr Kumar argued health must be a central focus of environmental policies whereas current efforts are "piecemeal and lack teeth". He described the NCAP's measures as "band-aid solutions" and called for stricter enforcement and a shift toward health-centric policies and ground-level action. Dr Pant commended the NCAP's role in raising awareness and enhancing air quality monitoring but also called out its shortcomings in sustained, source-specific emission reductions. She suggested instead that a regionalised approach could allow for more targeted, impactful solutions. "The NCAP needs localised strategies focused on specific emission sources," she said. Dr Swaminathan also urged the NCAP to go beyond monitoring pollutants to focus on reducing emissions and prioritising health outcomes. "The NCAP's goals need to integrate public health directly. Pollution control isn't just about air quality. It's about people's lives," she said. "The program must shift from mere monitoring to actively reducing emissions with health as its primary focus." Vaibhav Chaturvedi, an environmental economist at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, stressed that the NCAP's targets are unrealistic if it doesn't pivot towards clean energy and reduce India's dependence on fossil fuels. "To make the NCAP effective, we need a structural overhaul, particularly in how we produce and consume energy," he said. Sophie Gummy, a technical officer with the WHO's Air Quality and Health Unit, expressed belief that the NCAP lacks the comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach required to achieve meaningful progress. She also said it needs to be accompanied by policies that protect vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by air pollution. "NCAP is a beginning, but a whole-society approach that spans sectors and prioritises the vulnerable is essential," she said. Economic and social costs "Poor air quality isn't just costing lives; it's costing livelihoods," Gummy added. Dr Swaminathan also called air pollution an economic crisis as well for its ability to raise healthcare costs and lower productivity (through lost work and school days). "Poor air quality leads to increased hospitalisations and higher healthcare costs, adding a financial burden on families and the health system," she said. Vulnerable, low-income communities bear the heaviest burden: "The poorest are most exposed yet least equipped to mitigate these effects," according to Dr Swaminathan — a situation reminiscent of the effects of climate change. "The burden of non-communicable diseases linked to pollution continues to rise" even as climate-related challenges like heat waves exacerbate health and productivity losses. Dr Kumar's 'My Solution to Pollution' campaign, under his foundation and the Doctors for Clean Air initiative, encourages communities to take small but meaningful action. "People can't wait for government solutions alone," he said. "If 140 crore people commit to small actions, like reducing idling cars outside schools or limiting waste-burning, we can



Air pollution is an economic crisis for its ability to raise healthcare costs and lower productivity through lost work and school days, especially in low-income communities

significantly reduce the local pollution load." A pilot program to prevent idling vehicles near school zones showed improved air quality, a potential model for broader change. "If each of us does our part, we can reduce pollution at the ground level."

The clean energy caveat Despite increasing public awareness, India's heavy dependence on fossil fuels remains a significant obstacle to change. While the government promotes electric vehicles, Dr Kumar warned their benefits would be limited if their batteries are charged with coal-fired electricity. He contended that an overhaul of energy infrastructure is required, including a complete transition away from coal. "We're tackling the problem from the wrong end," Chaturvedi, the environmental economist, said. "We're addressing symptoms — dust suppression, controlling stubble burning — but not the root cause, which is our reliance on fossil fuels and inadequate clean energy infrastructure." "True progress in air quality will require a pivot from coal to renewables, coupled with a robust national investment in sustainable infrastructure." Dr Pant also pointed out that people in rural locales bank extensively on biomass and also need access to cleaner energy. "For many rural families, wood and animal dung are the only affordable options for cooking fuel," she said, adding that the health impact of household pollution, particularly for women and children, is as important as urban air quality. Policy reforms, public accountability

Experts said it could be critical for the NCAP to adopt a regional approach rather than presume one size can fit all. Dr Pant suggested localised targets could allow India's diverse regions to address their most pressing pollution sources — industrial emissions, agricultural burning, or urban vehicle congestion — differently. "Air pollution is deeply complex. By prioritising interventions

at the state and local levels, we can tailor strategies to where they're needed most," she said. Second, while experts have mixed reactions to listing pollution as a cause of death on death certificates, Dr Kumar said this explicit acknowledgment could increase public awareness. "When you add pollution to the death certificate, you're making people see the cause-and-effect link in their lives," he says. Dr Swaminathan agrees: "Having an official link on death records could push more serious health and policy actions against pollution."

She also proposed establishing a regulatory body akin to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to enforce environmental standards and integrate interdisciplinary policymaking. "India lacks a comprehensive body to regulate air, water, and other pollutants that threaten public health," she said. Dr Pant echoed her, saying "a unified regulatory body could streamline and strengthen India's fragmented environmental policies." But Dr Kumar was wary of bureaucratic hurdles: "We don't need more agencies; we need stronger enforcement." Toward lasting solutions The UNEP reports called for systemic changes in the transportation, energy, and health sectors to curb pollution effectively. Experts agreed a national clean air strategy should prioritise public health, climate mitigation, and community engagement. For Dr Kumar, the urgency can't be overstated. "Pollution is now in our lungs, and it's not going to leave on its own. Each breath we take is a reminder of how much needs to change." "This isn't only about the environment," Dr Pant added: "it's about every person in this country having the right to breathe without fear." India stands at a crossroads and its choices today will determine the health of generations to come. As Gummy said, "Investing in clean air today is investing in India's economic and social future."

In Ranthambore, tigers and humans struggle for space and survival

On the morning of November 2, on a hillock adjacent to Uliyana village, the rhythmic bleating of goats suddenly went silent. Over the next few hours, the village, situated in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, witnessed the discovery of a corpse, flying axes and improvised low-intensity devices, a protest, and later in the night, the carcass of a 12-year-old tiger. Bordering the over 1,500-square-kilometre Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, the village has often seen Royal Bengal Tigers descend from forested hillocks to the low-lying agricultural fields in search of easy prey like cattle. However, on that Saturday, the tiger was allegedly found sitting next to the mauled body of a villager, Bharat Lal Meena, 50. The tiger had one paw on the corpse, say villagers. Later, he was identified as Chirico, or T-86, the Forest Department's 'file name' used for tracking purposes. According to government data, from 2019 to 2024, five human beings have lost their lives in tiger attacks, and over 2,000 cattle were killed by tigers in the same period. While the Forest Department records the number of tiger-related deaths, there is no record of them being killed.

A few days after the incident, there were reports in the media about the Forest Department recording that 25 of Ranthambore's 75 tigers were "missing". Officials clarified that 14 tigers had been missing for less than a year; 11 for over a year. An official says there could be many reasons for this: tigers not caught in the monitoring cameras, migration, death due to old age, and even poaching. Soon, 10 of the 14 were tracked. The National Tiger Conservation Authority, which conducts a tiger census every four years, has asked the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to look into the matter. A village mourns

In Uliyana, a shroud of grief surrounds the newly constructed house of Bharat Lal's family. Prasathi Meena, his wife, is surrounded by women relatives in one corner of the house. "There was a lot of commotion; then someone said my husband had been attacked by a tiger. What happened after that is a blur now," says Prasathi in a hushed tone from beneath a ghoonghat (veil) that covers her face and neck. Prasathi, who villagers say fainted seconds after receiving the news, recalls that her husband had stepped out to take his goats to graze in the buffer zone between the tiger reserve and their village. There are walls built around villages, but there are breaks, and many require repair. "My husband would step out every day around 10.30 a.m. On that day too, he had his meal and left with the goats around noon," Prasathi says, her voice drowning amid the heavy, synchronised wails of women mourning around her. She never imagined that the tiger would take him. "Why did the tiger not take the goats and spare him?" she says. Babu Lal, the sarpanch of Uliyana, who was at the forefront of the attempted rescue mission, recalls seeing the tiger sitting next to the body of Bharat Lal. "We weren't sure what his condition was, but the chance of him surviving a tiger attack was slim," he says. The low-lying buffer zone, which separates the agricultural land of the village from the lush green tiger terrain in the hills, soon saw the rise of a mob. Instinctively, villagers threw tote



(countrymade bombs used to break stones), axes, stones, and every sharp object they had at the tiger, Babu recounts. "I had called the Forest Department and the police, but they did not come immediately and we had to try and save our brother," he says.

Chirico retreated into the forest and the villagers rushed to Bharat Lal, who had grievous injuries. Angry and frustrated at the lack of a proactive approach by government agencies, the villagers carried his body to Sawai Madhopur-Kundera Road, almost 5 km away. "Over 1,000 people sat in protest on the road, blocking it for passers-by. The mob refused to hand over the body for post-mortem until the family was paid ₹15 lakh," a senior Forest Department official says. Twenty-one hours later, State Agriculture Minister Kirodi Lal Meena met the angry villagers on the road that connects villages in the district. "The villagers handed over the body and cleared the road only after the Minister assured them of compensation," recalls the official. Years of anger and distrust towards the Forest Department officials is not new, says Dharmendra Khandal, a wildlife biologist with Tiger Watch, a non-profit organisation involved in wildlife conservation in Ranthambore. "Fateh Singh Rathore [who went on to become Ranthambore's Field Director] was attacked by the villagers of Uliyana in the 1980s. The villagers had broken both his legs. His life was spared only because his driver managed to come between him and the angry mob," says Khandal. Rathore, who founded Tiger Watch and is often called India's 'Tiger Guru', was one of the members of the first Project Tiger started in 1973 to conserve tigers in the country. "The vil-

lagers were angry that they were being displaced by Rathore to give better structure to the tiger reserve," Khandal says. The belief among villagers today is that the reserve is being maintained to attract international tourists at the cost of the lives of people who live in the forest, he says.

The day after Bharat Lal died, the Forest Department formed a search party to look for Chirico. "We could not enter the village as the residents were still agitated, and from what human intel we had received, the tiger was badly injured after he was attacked," says the official. The department sent drones around the forest bordering Uliyana and spotted the tiger's carcass about 500 metres from the spot where the villagers had found Bharat Lal's body. "Chirico has often preyed on cattle in the nearby villages but not on any human. Contrary to what locals are saying, he was not a man-eater," he says.

The official adds that the tiger had old injuries on his front legs and chest from a fight for territory with another tiger in the forest. "The post-mortem report has shown that those wounds were healing. He died primarily due to traumatic injury on his face and back from sharp objects," he says. A retired Forest Department official says contrary to the perception of the villagers, a majority of Ranthambore's tigers are not man-eaters. "A man-eating tiger is one that has been compelled through stress of circumstances to resort to preying on humans," the official says. These circumstances are usually beyond the tiger's control. "Mostly wounded, old tigers resort to becoming man-eaters, but human beings are not their natural prey," he says. Anoop K.R., Field Director, Ranthambore, says it is possible that T-86

had wanted to attack the cattle, but since the man was a barrier, the tiger attacked him instead. Changing patterns Despite villagers coexisting with tigers and other wildlife in the area, increased human-animal conflict has forced people to make changes in their ways of living and working. In Khava village in the same district, Bhatti Lal says his brother was mauled and killed by a tiger last year when he took his goats out to graze not far from the boundary wall that separates the village from the forest. "He was sitting in the hilly area while the goats were grazing. The tiger attacked him from behind and dragged him into the forest," says Bhatti. Since then, the pastoralists in the area have started making loud sounds when they take cattle to graze, he adds. Hanuman Meena, another resident of Khava village, says most villagers are selling their livestock at a loss. "A grown goat can be sold for more than ₹10,000, but now fearing for our lives, most of us are selling them at ₹4,000-₹5,000," says Hanuman. This has also deprived them of a livelihood from dairy products. Most villagers in the area depend on growing wheat, jowar, or bajra. A few are employed in the tourism industry. Cattle rearing communities around Ranthambore National Park are selling their goats and cattle in apprehension of its loss. News of Bharat Lal's death also reached the neighbouring villages like Padli. Here, in 2019, a woman was attacked by a tiger while defecating in the fields. While in Uliyana and Khava, tigers had attacked villagers on the periphery of the forest, in Padli, Munni Devi was killed about 6 km from the forest area, say villagers. According to her neighbour, Rekha Devi, tigers often roam in the village's guava patches, but it was for the first time that it had attacked a human. "