

## 1. East Asia Summit

**Topic: International Relations**

### East Asia Summit

Leaders' summit in Naypyidaw, Myanmar on November 12-13



■ Members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Sources: Asean/Australia DFAT

AFP

**In News:** Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel attended the 10th East Asia Summit Economic Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap City, Cambodia.

#### More on the Topic:

- The Ministers exchanged views on global and regional economic developments including the outcomes of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference, post-pandemic economic recovery efforts, measures adopted to mitigate the impact of global supply chains disruptions and strong inflation pressure.
- India has reiterated **India's willingness to collaborate with East Asian partners in the production of vaccines, generic drugs and medical technologies used for the treatment of COVID-19 patients.**
- India also reiterated India's commitment to strengthening the EAS as an ASEAN-led organisation and its support in collective actions of the EAS Forum aimed at mitigating the economic impact of the pandemic and strengthening regional economic architecture.

#### About East Asia Summit:

- The East Asia Summit (EAS) is **the Indo-Pacific's premier forum for strategic dialogue**. It is the **only leader-led forum at which all key Indo-Pacific partners meet** to discuss political, security and economic challenges facing the region, and has an important role to play in advancing closer regional cooperation.
- The inaugural EAS was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2005.
- The EAS has **18 members - the ten ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) along with**

**Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States.**

- ASEAN leads the forum, and the chair position rotates between ASEAN Member States annually.
- In 2021 EAS members represented **53.1 per cent of the world's population and accounted for 59.5 per cent of global GDP.**

Source: Indian Express

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## 2. Market-based Economic Dispatch (MBED) Model

**Topic: Economy**



**In News:** The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission's (CERC) proposed market-based economic dispatch (MBED) model can significantly improve cost and resource efficiency.

**More on the Topic:**

- The Market-Based Economic Dispatch (MBED) mechanism, the Union Ministry of Power proposal **envisages centralised scheduling for dispatching the entire annual electricity consumption of around 1,400 billion units.**
- This will mark a clear shift from a decentralised model followed now, which has been buttressed by the Electricity Act 2003 and follow-on reforms.

**Implementation:**

- The market operator will arrive at a **market clearing price (MCP) by matching the last generators' supply offer** matched to meet the demand offers.
- The Discoms would have to procure the required electricity from the market operator at the MCP, which, in turn, would be paid to the Gencos supplying power.
- **The settlement for fixed costs shall be outside the ambit of this market.**
- Discoms shall **pay the same to their contracted Gencos based on the latter's availability.**
- However, if the MCP is higher than the contracted price (variable cost) a Genco had agreed with a Discom, then the Genco will refund the excess to the Discom.
- This ensures that **the Discom will not be forced to pay more** for its contracted capacity.

**Pros:**

- **Reduced power purchase costs:** Centralised pool of generation and demand offers will make Gencos to become more cost-efficient or shut down, thus lowering the overall variable cost of power in India.
- **Greater renewable energy integration:** With power being scheduled and dispatched over a larger balancing zone, renewable energy is expected to be curtailed at a lower rate.

**Concerns:**

- The MBED model is **seen as impinging on the relative autonomy of states** in managing their electricity sector, including their own generating stations, and making the discoms (distribution companies that are mostly state-owned) entirely dependent on the centralised mandatory market pool requirements.
- There are concerns **this could strip states of their freedom to decide their own electricity requirement** while managing seasonal and local demand trends.

**Views Expressed by The Central Government:**

- The Centre's argument is that **the current model of states doing scheduling is suboptimal.**
- As part of this, an algorithm developed by the NLDC called the Security Constrained Economic Dispatch (SCED) is being cited as a solution, which is aimed at assisting regulators in making informed calls on scheduling decisions on a nationwide basis.

**Way Ahead:**

- There is a need for more consensus building exercise before rolling out of the plan.
- Instead of moving towards complete centralization, steps to reinforce the existing voluntary pool-based markets must be considered.

Source: Hindu

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### 3. 'Indian Swachhata League'

**Topic: Government Programmes**



**In News:** 'Indian Swachhata League' has started recently.

**More on the Topic:**

- 'Indian Swachhata League' is an **inter-city competition with the spirit of cleanliness and resolve** towards ensuring garbage-free beaches, hills and tourist places in the country.
- 'India Swachhata League' started with '**Swachh Amrit Mahotsav**', a fortnight of activities from September 17 to October 2 to galvanise action around 'swachhata' (cleanliness).
- The activities are being organised by the **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry**.
- The 1st edition of the Indian Swachhata League witnessed a record with more than half a million youth joining hands for clean beaches, hills and tourist spots.

#### About Swachh Bharat Mission:

- Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a **country-wide campaign initiated by the Government of India in 2014 to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management**.
- It is a restructured version of the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan launched in 2009.
- Phase 1 of the Swachh Bharat Mission lasted till October 2019.
- Phase 2 is being implemented between 2020–21 and 2024–25.
- The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi through the construction of toilets.
- Under the scheme, **the Government provides subsidies for constructing toilets, waste management structures, and awareness campaigns to bring behaviour change**.
- **The mission is split into two: Rural and Urban**.
- In rural areas "SBM - Gramin" is financed and monitored through the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- In Urban areas "SBM - urban" is overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Source: Hindu

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## 4. Caracal

**Topic: Environment and Ecology**



**In News:** The species caracal, which was used by India's nobility in the sport of coursing like the cheetah, is struggling to survive.

**More on the Topic:**

- The caracal (*Caracal caracal*) is a **medium-sized wild cat native to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and arid areas of Pakistan and north western India.**
- The Asiatic caracal is an **elusive medium-sized and locally threatened felid (cat) species**, which has been **widely reported to be on the brink of extinction in India.**
- The reasons are **large-scale hunting, illegal trading and loss of natural habitats are considered significant threats to the species.**

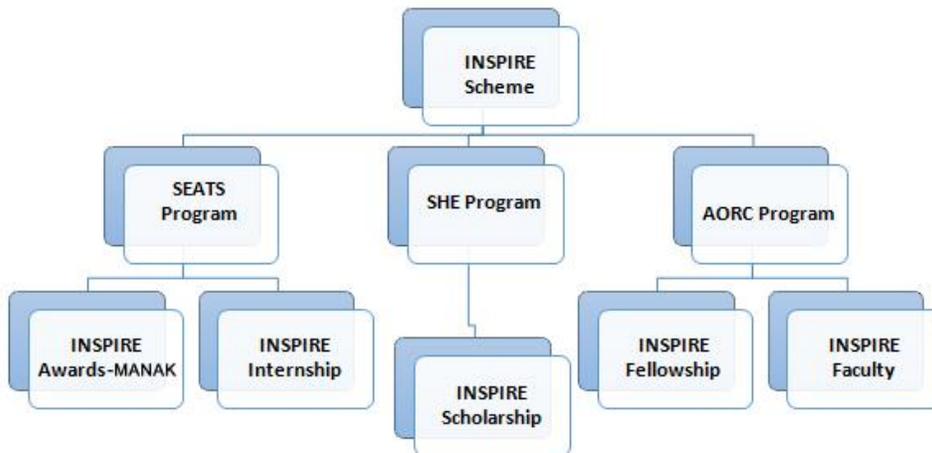
**Protection Status:**

- The caracal is currently included in **Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** and the **Near Threatened category** International Union for Conservation of Nature Red list assessment in India.
- In 2021, the National Board for Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change included Caracal in the list of Critically Endangered species under critically endangered species recovery programme.

Source: Indian Express

## 5. 'Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) scheme

Topic: Government Schemes



**In News:** Government presented INSPIRES awards to 60 Start-Ups and financial support to 53,021 students.

**More on the Topic:**

- The award is instituted by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, and these innovators will be extended complete incubation support for their entrepreneurship journey.

- The annual INSPIRE Awards MANAK (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspiration and Knowledge) competition attracted an unprecedented 6.53 lakh ideas and innovations from all states and UTs of the country in 2020-21.

#### INSPIRE Scheme:

- The basic objective of INSPIRE would be **to communicate to the youth population of the country the excitements of creative pursuit of science** and attract talent to the study of science at an early stage and build the required critical human resource pool for strengthening and expanding the Science & Technology system and R&D base.
- INSPIRE Scheme has included **three programs**. They are i) Scheme for Early Attraction of Talents for Science (SEATS), b) Scholarship for Higher Education (SHE) and c) Assured Opportunity for Research Careers (AORC).

Source: Hindu

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## 6. Sova Virus

Topic: Science and Technology



**In News:** The new mobile banking 'Trojan' virus -- SOVA -- which can stealthily encrypt an Android phone for ransom and is hard to uninstall is targeting Indian customers.

#### More on the Topic:

- SOVA can add **false overlays to a range of apps and "mimic" over 200 banking and payment applications in order to con the Android user.**
- The latest version of this malware hides itself within fake Android applications that show up with the logo of a few famous legitimate apps like Chrome, Amazon, NFT (non-fungible token linked to crypto currency) platform to deceive users into installing them.
- The lethality of the virus can be gauged from the fact **that it can collect keystrokes, steal cookies, intercept multi-factor authentication (MFA) tokens, take screenshots and record video from a webcam and can perform gestures like screen click, swipe etc. using android accessibility service.**

Source: Down to Earth



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