

1. SARAL

Context: Ministry of Power launched the **State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index (SARAL)** during the Review Planning and Monitoring (RPM) Meeting with States and State Power Utilities.

About:

- ▶▶ SARAL has been designed collaboratively by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)**, **Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF)**, **Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)** and **Ernst & Young (EY)**.
- ▶▶ SARAL currently captures Five Key aspects –
 - ✓ Robustness of Policy Framework
 - ✓ Implementation Environment
 - ✓ Investment Climate
 - ✓ Consumer Experience
 - ✓ Business Ecosystem
- ▶▶ The **objective** of index is to incentivise rooftop solar by creating healthy competition among the States.
- ▶▶ The Index evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development.
- ▶▶ **Ranking:** Karnataka has been placed at the first rank in the Index.
- ▶▶ Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively.
- ▶▶ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has set a target of 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, of which 100 GW solar power is to be operational by March 2022, of which 40 GW is expected to come from grid connected solar rooftops.

2. ILLEGAL GLOBAL TIGER TRADE

Context: A new report has quantified the illegal global trade in tigers and tiger parts over a 19-year period between 2000 and 2018.

- ▶▶ India has the world's largest tiger population – 2,967 in the Tiger Census released last month – and the highest extent of tiger trade also happens in the country.

- ▶▶ The new report has been compiled by Traffic, an NGO working in conservation and currently in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature

About TRAFFIC

- ▶▶ It is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in Wild Animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of Nature.
- ▶▶ It was founded in 1976 as a strategic alliance of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

- ▶▶ It is an international organisation working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- ▶▶ It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, and education.
- ▶▶ IUCN's mission is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable"
- ▶▶ The organization is best known to the wider public for compiling and publishing the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species which assesses the conservation status of species worldwide

3. SARASWATI 2.0

Context: The Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT KGP) will steer Saraswati 2.0 — a Rs. 15-crore project funded by the European Union and the Government of India's departments of Science and Technology and Biotechnology

About:

- ▶▶ **Aim:** It is to develop affordable technologies for treatment of wastewater and provide solutions for its use in both rural and urban India.
- ▶▶ Saraswati 2.0, which has been selected under the EU-India Joint Call on Research and Innovation for Water, follows the Saraswati project of 2012-17.
- ▶▶ IIT KGP will steer three pilot projects to treat wastewater, make it reusable and also explore its usage in compost or value-added products that are produced free of pathogens.
- ▶▶ For this, three plants will be soon set up at IIT KGP:
- ▶▶ Two anaerobic digesters, one with bio-electro chemical filter and another with photoheterotrophic bioreactor — and

- ▶▶ A plant for ultrasonic treatment of sludge.

Additional Points:

- ▶▶ Much emphasis laid on bringing piped water to all rural households by 2024.
- ▶▶ For the purpose, the Centre also launched a new unified Jal Shakti ministry by merging the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

4. GOGABIL LAKE

Context: The Gogabil Lake in **Katihar district**, one of the largest wetlands of **Bihar**, has now been declared the state's first Bird Conservation Reserve by the Environment Department.

About Gogabil Lake

- ▶▶ The Gogabil Lake is located in Katihar district, one of the largest wetlands of Bihar
- ▶▶ Nearly 300 migratory birds come to the lake and its vicinity during monsoon and winter from the Caspian Sea and Siberian region.
- ▶▶ Among the different species of migratory birds, there are around 90 species of threatened birds, including stork, black-necked stork and white Ibis.
- ▶▶ Spread over 73.88 acres of land, this ox-bow shaped lake is formed by the Mahananda and Kankahar in the north and Ganga in the south.

5. PHUPGAON- IRON AGE SETTLEMENT

Context: The recent excavation carried out by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at Maharashtra's Phupgaon has revealed evidence of an Iron Age settlement in the Vidarbha

- ▶▶ The team of ASI took up an intensive survey in the region between Chandur Bazar to Dariyapur of Purna basin at Phupgaon, Amravati district of Maharashtra.
- ▶▶ Chronologically, the site could be placed between 7th C BCE and 4th C BCE.

About:

- ▶▶ The site is situated in the vast meander of the river Purna, a major tributary of Tapi, which used to be a perennial river, but at present is completely dried-up due to the dam construction in the upper stream.
- ▶▶ A total of 9 trenches were taken for excavations, which brought to light the house remains and other associated features like hearth, post-holes and artefacts.
- ▶▶ The excavation also exposed antiquities like beads of agate-carnelian, jasper, quartz and agate were collected in large quantity. Iron, Copper objects have also been collected from all the trenches. Large quantity of graffiti marks had been observed on the potsherds.

- ▶▶ The excavation indicates the presence of sedentary (permanent) settlement, belonging to the Iron Age of Vidarbha.
- ▶▶ The finding from Phupgaon indicates its contemporaneity with other Iron Age settlements of Vidarbha like Naikund, Mahurjhari, Bhagimori and Thakalkat.
- ▶▶ **River Purna:** a major tributary of the river Tapi

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

- ▶▶ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage in India.
- ▶▶ The genesis of systematic archaeological pursuits in India can be traced to the efforts of Sir William Jones, who put together a group of antiquarians to form the Asiatic Society on 15th January 1784 in Calcutta.
- ▶▶ The first legislative attempt to make the government intervene in case of risks to monuments was through Bengal Regulation XIX of 1810.
- ▶▶ ASI regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

6. NISHTHA

Context: **Ministry of Human Resource Development** launched the National Mission to improve Learning Outcomes at the Elementary level- NISHTHA in Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.

About:

- ▶▶ **NISHTHA:** National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement
- ▶▶ It is the world's largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world.
- ▶▶ **Objective:** To motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.
- ▶▶ Teachers will get awareness and develop their skills on various aspects related to Learning Outcomes, School Safety and Security, ICT in teaching-learning including Artificial Intelligence, Environmental Concerns and School Based Assessment in a joyful learning manner.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To build the capacities of around 42 lakh participants covering all teachers and Heads of Schools at the elementary level in all Government schools, faculty members of SCERTs, DIETs as well as Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators in all States/UTs.

- ▶▶ Training will be conducted directly by 33120 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) and State Resource Persons (SRP) identified by the State and UTs, who will in turn be trained by 120 National Resource Persons identified from NCERT, NIEPA, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), CBSE and NGO.

