Narrow-Banded Rain snake

Prelims – *Current events of National and International Importance | Bio-diversity.*

Why in News?

Recently, Mizoram university and Guwahati based biodiversity conservation group, Help Earth, have recorded a new species of rain snake.

- **Scientific name –** Smithophis leptofasciatus.
  - **Genus –** It is the third species in the genus, Smithophis to have been recorded from the northeastern State
  - **Nomenclature –** Leptofasciatus is a Greek and Latin hybrid, meaning 'narrow-banded', refers the snake's distinctive dorsal markings.
- **Another name –** Ruahrul in Mizoram.
- **Family –** Natricidae.
- **Size –** Small sized snake, reach up to 32 cm.
- **Morphology –** Predominantly shiny dark or black, interspersed with distinct, narrow, creamish-white or yellowish-lime transverse bands, each covering only one or two dorsal scales.



- **Habitat –**Semi-aquatic, close to small streams under leaf litter, and beneath rocks or decaying logs.
- **Distribution –** Tropical wet montane and tropical semi-evergreen forests at elevations ranging from approximately 900–1,200 m in Mizoram, India. Endemic to tropical forest

in Mizoram.

- **Behavioural traits -** It is ***nocturnal*** and most commonly spotted during the monsoon season.
- **Reproduction -** A gravid female observed in captivity laid 6 eggs, providing rare reproductive data.
- **Significance -** The new species reinforces Mizoram's importance as a biodiversity hotspot.

References

1. The Hindu| New Species Rain Snake
2. Taprobanica| Smithophis leptofasciatus

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