



News Analysis (04 Feb, 2021)

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Military Coup in Myanmar

Why in News

Recently, the **Myanmar military has grabbed power in a coup - the third time in the nation's history** since its independence from British rule in 1948.

- A **one-year state of emergency** has been imposed and **democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained.**
- **'Coup'** is generally described as a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.

Myanmar

- **Location:**
Myanmar, also known as Burma, is in South East Asia and neighbours Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, China and India.
- **Demography:**
It has a population of about 54 million, most of whom are Burmese speakers, although other languages are also spoken. The biggest city is Yangon (Rangoon) but the capital is Nay Pyi Taw.
- **Religion:**
The main religion is **Buddhism**. There are many ethnic groups in the country, including **Rohingya Muslims**.
- **Polity:**
 - The country **gained independence from Britain in 1948**. It was ruled by the armed forces from 1962 until 2011, when a new government began ushering in a return to civilian rule.
 - In the 2010s, **the military regime decided to transition the country towards democracy**. Although the armed forces remained powerful, political opponents were freed and elections were allowed to be held.
 - **The NLD won the 2015 election**, the country's first free and fair election participated by multiple parties, and formed the government, raising hopes that the country is on its way to full transition to democracy.



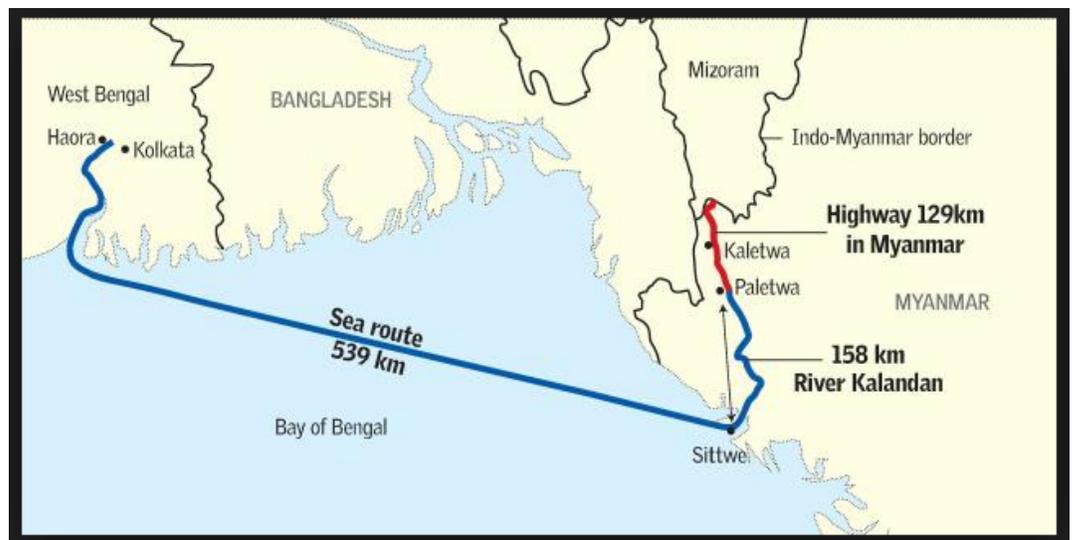
Key Points

- **About the Military Coup:**
 - In the **November 2020 parliamentary election**, Suu Kyi's party **National League for Democracy (NLD)** secured the majority of the seats.
 - In the Myanmar's Parliament, **the military holds 25% of the total seats according to the 2008 military-drafted constitution** and several key ministerial positions are also reserved for military appointees.
 - When the newly elected Myanmar lawmakers were to **hold the first session of Parliament in 2021**, the **military imposed a state of emergency** for one year **citing massive voting fraud** in the parliamentary elections.
- **Global Reaction:**
 - **China:** 'All parties in Myanmar will properly handle their differences under the constitution and legal framework to maintain political and social stability'.
 - **USA:** The USA President **threatened to reimpose sanctions on Myanmar** following a coup by the country's military leaders and called for a **concerted international response** to press them to relinquish power.
 - **ASEAN Countries:** ASEAN's current chair, Brunei, called for 'dialogue among parties, reconciliation and the return to normalcy'.
 - Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia expressed concern, while Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines noted that this was Myanmar's 'internal affair'.
 - **India's Reaction:**
 - India supports the process of democratic transition in Myanmar.
 - Though India has expressed deep concern over recent developments in Myanmar, **cutting off from the Myanmar military is not a viable option** as India has significant economic and strategic interests in Myanmar and its neighbourhood.

- **India’s Strategic interests in Myanmar and its relations with Myanmar Military:**
 - **India’s Relationship with Myanmar Military:**
 - India’s military-diplomatic outreach to Myanmar became a **cornerstone of its Act East policy**.
 - On the eve of the recent visit of the Foreign Secretary Chief of the Army Staff to Myanmar in 2020, **Myanmar handed over 22 Indian insurgents from across the border** and it was decided to ramp up the sale of military hardware to Myanmar, including 105 mm light artillery guns, naval gunboats and more recently, lightweight torpedoes.
 - Recent example of cooperation is that **Myanmar has begun to vaccinate itself with the 1.5 million doses of Covid vaccine sent by India**, while putting China’s 3,00,000 doses on hold.
 - **India’s Interests in Myanmar:**

Infrastructure and Connectivity: India has cultivated several infrastructure and development projects with Myanmar, which it sees as the “gateway to the East” and ASEAN countries:

 - **Operationalisation of the crucial Sittwe port** in Myanmar’s Rakhine state by 2021 is committed.
 - India assists infrastructure projects such as the **India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway** and the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**.
 - The Kaladan project will link **Kolkata to Sittwe** in Myanmar and then from Myanmar’s Kaladan river to India’s north-east.
 - The two countries signed the **Land Border Crossing Agreement in 2018**, which allowed bona fide travellers with valid documents to cross the border at two international points of entry/exit- Moreh-Tamu and Zokhawthar-Rih.



- **Security:** India has been concerned over some militant groups like the **United National Liberation Front (UNLF)** and **National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)** from the North-East region taking shelter in Myanmar. Indian needs perpetual support and coordination from Myanmar for the **maintenance of security and stability along its North East border areas.**

- **Rohingya Issues:** India is committed to ensuring safe, sustainable and speedy return of Rohingya refugees from refugee camps of India and Bangladesh.
Building on the progress made under the **Rakhine State Development Programme (RSDP)**, India has recently proposed to finalise projects under phase-III of the programme, including setting up of a skills training centre and upgrading of agricultural mechanisation.
- **Investment:** With Indian investments of over USD 1.2 billion, Myanmar holds considerable importance than any other country in South Asia.
- **Energy:** The two countries are also expanding partnership in the area of energy cooperation.
Recently, India approved an investment of over USD 120 million in the **Shwe Oil and Gas project**.

Way Forward

India should continue to engage with the present regime in Myanmar working towards mutual development of people of both the countries while it should support sharing experiences in constitutionalism and federalism to assist Myanmar in resolving the prevailing stalemate.

Source:TH

Uniform Minimum Age for Marriage

Why in News

Recently, the **Supreme Court** (SC) decided to examine a plea to transfer to itself cases pending in the Delhi and Rajasthan High Courts to declare a “**uniform minimum age**” for marriage.

The **Union government has also set up a committee** to reconsider the minimum age of marriage for women, which is currently 18.

Key Points

- **About:**

- A Bench led by **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** issued notice to the government on a plea, which was filed to “**secure gender justice, gender equality, and dignity of women**”.

The plea sought a direction to the Union government to remove the anomalies in the minimum age of marriage and make it ‘**gender-neutral, religion-neutral and uniform for all citizens**’.

Various laws state that the minimum age to get married should be **18 for women and 21 for men**.

- The **SC has power under Article 139A to transfer to itself**, cases involving the same or substantially the same questions of law pending before two or more high courts. It has been argued that the different ages for marriage **violated the fundamental rights of equality (Article 14), protection against discrimination (Article 15), and dignity of life (Article 21)** of citizens and **went against** India’s commitment under the **convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW)**.

- **Current Laws Related to Marriage in India:**

- For Hindus, The **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**, sets 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom.

However, **child marriages are not illegal** even though **they can be declared void at the request of the minor** in the marriage.

- In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid.
- The **Special Marriage Act, 1954** and the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men respectively.

- **Pros of Increasing Marriageable Age for Girls and Making it Uniform:**

- **Socio-economic Fronts:** Increasing the legal age for the marriage of women has enormous benefits on social and economic fronts including:

- Lowering the **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)**.
- Improvement of nutrition levels.
- **On the financial front, opportunities will be opened up** for women to pursue higher education and careers and become financially empowered, thus resulting in a more egalitarian society.

- **More female labour force participation:** Increasing the marriage age will push the mean marriage age higher and will lead to more females doing graduation and hence **improving the female labour force participation ratio**.

The percentage of **females doing graduation will increase by at least 5-7 percentage points** from the **current level of 9.8%**.

- **The benefit for both:** Both men and women will gain economically and socially by marrying when they are more than the legal age, but added that the urge of the women is much higher as they always get a higher payoff by becoming financially empowered to take decisions.

- **Cons of Increasing Marriageable Age for Girls and Making it Uniform:**
 - **Minimum is not mandatory:** Minimum age of marriage **does not mean mandatory age.**

It only signifies that below that age there could be criminal prosecution under the child marriage law.
 - **Rights of the girls are threatened:** Increasing the age of marriage to 21 years would mean that **girls will have no say in their personal matters until they are 21.**

The elementary right that the Convention of the Right of Children of the **United Nation** bestows upon minors — the right to be heard, the right for their views to be considered — will be denied to girls right up till 21, beyond adulthood.
 - **Exploitation of law by parents:** The child marriage law has been used by parents against eloping daughters. **It has become a tool for parental control and for punishment of boys or men whom girls choose as their husbands.**
 - Most cases that are taken to court are self-arranged marriages.
 - And only one-third of the cases relate to arranged marriages, which are sometimes brought by parents or husbands to dissolve or to nullify marriages that have broken down because of domestic violence, dowry or compatibility issues.
 - **Social validity of marriages:** Even if the law declares a marriage before the specified age as void, in the eyes of the community, arranged marriages will have social validity.

This **worsens the condition of the girls who are widowed** even before reaching the new legal age for marriage.
 - **Increased female infanticide:** Moreover, raising the female marriage age in the countries that have **high son preference** and high poverty may have the unintended consequence of **increasing the prevalence of female infanticide and sex-selective abortion.**

Way forward

- **Altering the thinking:**

Any ground-level change will only happen when the psyche of people will alter. **No law is effective if change does not occur from within.**
 - **Erasing the stereotype:**

Increasing the legal age for marriage is a must, even legally as it should **get us out of the stereotype mindset that women are more mature than men of the same age** and therefore can be allowed to marry sooner.
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Asset Reconstruction Company

Why in News

In the **Budget 2021-22**, **Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC)** have been proposed to be set up by **state-owned and private sector banks**, and there will be **no equity contribution from the government.**

- The ARC, which will have an **Asset Management Company (AMC)** to manage and sell bad assets, will look to resolve stressed assets of Rs. 2-2.5 lakh crore that remain unresolved in around 70 large accounts.
- This is being considered as the **government's version of a bad bank**.

Key Points

- **About the Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC):**
 - **Objective:**
 - It is a **specialized financial institution** that buys the **Non Performing Assets (NPAs)** from banks and financial institutions so that they can clean up their balance sheets.
 - This **helps banks to concentrate in normal banking activities**. Banks rather than going after the defaulters by wasting their time and effort, can sell the bad assets to the ARCs at a mutually agreed value.
 - **Legal Basis:**
 - The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (**SARFAESI Act, 2002**) provides the legal basis for the setting up of ARCs in India.
 - The SARFAESI Act helps reconstruction of bad assets without the intervention of courts. Since then, a large number of ARCs were formed and were registered with the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** which has got the power to regulate the ARCs.
 - **Capital Needs for ARCs:**
 - As per amendment made in the SARFAESI Act in 2016, an ARC should have a minimum net owned fund of Rs. 2 crore.
 - **The RBI raised this amount to Rs. 100 crore in 2017.** The ARCs also have to maintain a **capital adequacy ratio** of 15% of its **risk weighted assets**.
Risk-weighted assets are used to determine the minimum amount of capital that must be held by banks and other financial institutions in order to reduce the risk of insolvency.

- **About the new ARC:**
 - **Need:**
 - Of the existing ARCs, **only 3-4 are adequately capitalised**, while the more-than-dozen remaining are thinly capitalised – necessitating the need to set up a new structure to resolve stressed assets urgently.
 - In a report released by Reserve Bank of India (RBI), it was said that **banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to 13.5% by September 2021**, from 7.5% in September 2020 under the baseline scenario.
 - **Functioning:**
 - The transfer of **stressed assets to the ARC will happen at net book value**, which is the value of assets minus provisioning done by banks against these assets. This could enable the banks to alleviate its losses from NPAs - a part of stressed assets.
 - **The bank will get 15% cash and 85% security receipts** against bad debt that will be sold to the ARC.
 - **Security Receipts (SR)** are issued by ARCs, when Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) of commercial banks (CB) or financial institutions (FI) are acquired by the ARCs for the purpose of recovery.
 - As per extant instructions, investment in SRs is restricted to the **Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs)**, as defined by SARFAESI Act 2002.
 - **Support by Central Government:**

While the **government will not provide any direct equity support** to the ARC, it **may provide sovereign guarantee** that could be needed to meet regulatory requirements.
- **Expected Benefits:**
 - This structure will reduce the load of stressed assets on the bank balance sheet and look to **resolve these bad debt in a market-led way**.
 - With most banks expected to be on board this company, the resolution is expected to be faster.

- **Other Proposed Reforms:**
 - **Development Financial Institution:**
 - The government could subsume **India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL)** into the proposed **Development Financial institution (DFI)**, which is being set up to enable long-term infra funding worth Rs. 5 lakh crore in 3 years.
 - **The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)**, the proposed DFI, will anchor the **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)**.
 - The **Reserve Bank of India** will regulate the proposed DFI, which will be fully owned by the government in initial years.
 - **Privatisation:**
 - With regard to the privatisation of **two state-owned banks and one insurer**, the companies will be identified by a government-defined process.
 - **NITI Aayog** will do the first round for selecting, then it will go to the core group of secretaries on disinvestment and, thereafter, it will be examined by the alternate mechanism.
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Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management

Why in News

Recently, on the occasion of the **World Wetland Day**, the Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change announced the establishment of a **Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM)**, as a part of the **National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)**.

- **World Wetlands Day** is celebrated every year on the **2nd of February**.
- The year 2021 also commemorates the **50th anniversary** of the **Convention on Wetlands** signed on 2nd February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
 - The theme for 2021 is '**Wetlands and Water**'.
 - It was first celebrated in **1997**.

Key Points

- **Significance of Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM):**
 - The dedicated Centre would **address specific research needs and knowledge gaps and will aid in the application of integrated approaches for conservation, management** and wise use of the wetlands.
 - It will help in **building partnerships and networks** with relevant national and international agencies.
 - It would serve as a **knowledge hub** and enable exchange between State/ UT Wetland Authorities, wetland users, managers, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.
 - It would also **assist the national and State/UT Governments** in the design and implementation of policy and regulatory frameworks, management planning, monitoring and targeted research for wetlands conservation.
- **Wetlands:**
 - **Wetlands** are ecosystems saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently. They include **mangroves**, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, **coral reefs**, marine areas no deeper than 6 metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs.
 - Though they cover only around **6% of the Earth's land** surface, **40% of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.**
- **Significance of Wetlands:**
 - Wetlands are a critical part of our natural environment. They **mitigate floods, protect coastlines** and build community resilience to disasters, absorb pollutants and improve water quality.
 - Wetlands are **critical to human and planet life.** More than **1 billion people depend on them for a living.**
 - They are a **vital source for food, raw materials, genetic resources for medicines, and hydropower.**
 - 30% of land-based **carbon** is stored in peatland (a type of wetlands).
 - They play an important role in **transport, tourism** and the **cultural and spiritual well-being** of people.
 - Many wetlands are areas of **natural beauty** and many are important to Aboriginal people.
- **Threats:**
 - As per the IPBES (**Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**)'s global assessment, wetlands are the most threatened ecosystem.
 - Wetlands are **disappearing 3 times faster than forests** due to human activities and global warming.
 - According to **UNESCO**, the threat to wetlands will have an adverse impact on 40% of the world's flora and fauna that live or breed in wetlands.
 - **Major threats:** Agriculture, development, pollution and **climate change.**

- **Status of Wetlands in India:**
 - India has nearly **4.6% of its land as wetlands**, covering an **area of 15.26 million hectares** and has **42 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)**
 - Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
 - There are currently over 2,300 Ramsar Sites around the world.
 - Recently, India has added **Tso Kar Wetland Complex** in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site.
 - Wetlands are regulated under the **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017**.
 - The 2010 version of the Rules provided for a **Central Wetland Regulatory Authority**, but new Rules of 2017 replaced it with state-level bodies and created a National Wetland Committee, which functions in an advisory role.
 - The **newer regulations removed some items** from the definition of “wetlands” including backwaters, lagoons, creeks, and estuaries.
 - Under the 2017 regulations, process to **identify the wetlands has been delegated to the States**.

National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management

- **Location:**
 - It is located at **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu.
- **Divisions:**
 - It has various research divisions including, Geospatial Sciences, Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Coastal environmental impact assessment, Conservation of Coastal & Marine Resources, etc.
- **Objective:**
 - It aims to **promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas** in India for the benefit and wellbeing of the traditional coastal and island communities.
 - It also intends to promote **sustainable** coasts through increased partnership, conservation practices, scientific research and **knowledge benefit** and well being of the current and future generation.
- **Role:**
 - **Survey of India** and NCSCM have **mapped the Hazard Line for the entire coast of India**, which includes vulnerability mapping of flood, erosion and sea-level rise.
 - It also **advises the Union and State Governments and other associated stakeholders** on policy, and scientific matters related to **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)**.

Source:PIB

Curbing Unsolicited Commercial Communications

Why in News

Recently, the Delhi High Court (HC) ordered the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** to ensure “complete and strict” implementation of the regulation issued by it in 2018 for curbing **Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC)**.

UCC means any Commercial Communication which a **subscriber opts not to receive**, but does **not include**- any transactional message or any message transmitted on the directions of the Central Government or State Government or agencies authorized by it.

Key Points

- **Background:**

A plea was filed by a company in the HC claiming that millions of its customers have been defrauded by the **phishing activities over the mobile networks and the failure of the telecom companies** to prevent the same has **caused financial and reputational loss**.

- It claimed that under the regulations, **the telecom companies are required to verify purported telemarketers seeking registration** (called registered telemarketers or RTMs) with them before granting access to their customer data and also take action immediately against all fraudulent RTMs.
- **Phishing** is a **cybercrime** in which a target or **targets are contacted by email, telephone or text message** by someone posing as a legitimate institution **to lure individuals into providing sensitive data** such as personally identifiable information, banking and credit card details, and passwords.
- It contended that the telecom companies are violating their obligations under the **Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preferences Regulations (TCCCPR) 2018**, to curb the problem of unsolicited commercial communications.

- **High Courts Direction:**

- **To TRAI:**

Ensure “complete and strict” implementation of the regulation issued by it in 2018 for curbing UCC.

- **To Telecom Service Providers (TSPs):**

Ensure strict compliance with the TCCCPR 2018 issued by TRAI.

Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preferences Regulations (TCCCPR) 2018

- It replaced the **Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2010 (2010 Regulations)**.
- It was issued by the TRAI to provide a revised regulatory framework **aimed at regulating 'unsolicited commercial communication' (UCC) in India**.
- The new regulatory framework has devolved **control and regulatory powers to access providers**, who are now required to **establish their own codes of practice (CoPs)** to deal with UCC.

- It provides for a wide range of customer preferences which are to be implemented in near real time using **Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT)** to make communications traceable and capable of being controlled effectively.
- It also provides for the use of **cloud-based solutions for handling complaints, the registration of headers and preferences**, and use of smart contracts for automated allocation of roles between entities in the commercial communication ecosystem.
The technology-based solutions are required to be tested in **regulatory sandboxes** under the oversight of the TRAI.

Source:TH

Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)

Why in News

In the **Budget 2021-22**, **Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)** has been announced under the **Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry to provide universal coverage of water supply to all households** through functional taps in all statutory towns in accordance with **Sustainable Development Goal- 6**.

It complements the **Jal Jeevan Mission (Rural)** which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) by 2024**.

Key Points

- **Objectives of Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban):**
 - **Securing tap and sewer connections:**
 - To bridge the estimated gap of 2.68 crore **urban household functional water tap connections**.
 - To provide 2.64 crore sewer connections/septage in 500 **AMRUT cities**.
 - **Rejuvenation of water bodies:**
To **augment sustainable fresh water supply** and create **green spaces and sponge cities** to reduce floods and enhance amenity value through an **Urban Aquifer Management** plan.
Sponge city is a city that has the capacity to mainstream urban water management into the urban planning policies and designs.
 - **Creating circular water economy:**
To promote **circular economy** of water through development of the city **water balance plan for each city** focusing on recycle/reuse of treated sewage, rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation.

- **Features of Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban):**
 - **Deploying Latest Technology:**
A **Technology Sub-Mission for water** is proposed to leverage latest global technologies in the field of water.
 - **Spreading Mass Awareness:**
 - **Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign** is proposed to spread awareness among masses about conservation of water.
 - JJM looks **to create a jan andolan for water**, thereby making it everyone's priority.
 - **Survey for equitable distribution:**
Pey Jal Survekshan will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process.
 - **Focus on strengthening urban local bodies:**
 - By reducing non-revenue water to below 20%.
Non-revenue water is the difference between the volume of water put into a water distribution system and the volume that is billed to customers.
 - Recycling used water to meet at least 20% of total city water demand and 40% for industrial water demand at State level.
 - Promoting dual piping systems.
 - Raising funds through issuance of **municipal bonds**.
 - Rejuvenation of water bodies.
 - **Promoting PPP Model:**
In order to promote **Public private partnership**, it has been mandated for cities having millions plus population to take up PPP projects worth minimum of 10% of their total project fund allocation.
 - **Funding:**
 - For **Union Territories**, there will be **100% central funding**.
 - For **North Eastern and Hill States**, central funding for projects will be **90%**.
 - **Central funding will be 50% for cities with less than 1 lakh population**, one third for cities with 1 lakh to 10 lakh population and 25% for cities with million plus population.
 - **Outcome based Funding:**
 - Funding from the Government for projects will be in **three tranches of 20:40:40**.
 - **Third instalment onwards will be released based on outcomes** achieved and credible exclusion will be exercised while funding.

Source: TH

Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance

Why in News

Recently, **the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance** started a worldwide campaign to raise awareness for conservation of fishing cats.

The Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance is a team of **conservationists, researchers and enthusiasts** working to achieve functioning floodplains and **coastal ecosystems that ensure survival of the fishing cat.**

Key Points



- **Scientific Name:** *Prionailurus viverrinus*.
- **Description:**
 - **It is twice the size of a house cat.**
 - The **fishing cat is nocturnal** (active at night) and apart from fish also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.
 - The species breed all year round.
 - They spend most of their lives in areas of dense vegetation close to water bodies and are excellent swimmers.
- **Habitat:**
 - Fishing cats have a patchy distribution along the **Eastern Ghats**. They abound in estuarine floodplains, tidal mangrove forests and also inland freshwater habitats.
 - Apart from **Sundarbans** in West Bengal and Bangladesh, fishing cats inhabit the **Chilika lagoon** and surrounding wetlands in Odisha, Coringa and Krishna mangroves in Andhra Pradesh.
- **Threats:**

Wetland degradation and conversion for aquaculture and other **commercial projects**, sand mining along river banks, agricultural intensification resulting in loss of riverine buffer and conflict with humans in certain areas resulting in targeted hunting and retaliatory killings.
- **Protection Status:**

- **Conservation Efforts:**

- Recently, **the Fishing Cat Conservation Alliance** has initiated a study of the **biogeographical distribution of the fishing cat** in the unprotected and human-dominated **landscapes of the northeastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.**
- In 2012, the **West Bengal government officially declared the Fishing Cat as the State Animal** and the Calcutta Zoo has two big enclosures dedicated to them.
- In Odisha, many NGOs and wildlife conservation Societies are involved in Fishing Cat research and conservation work.
- **The Fishing Cat Project**, launched in 2010 started raising awareness about the Cat in West Bengal.

Source:TH
