



The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process

Why in News

External Affairs Minister of India attended the 9th **Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process** held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

- He called for a **“double peace”** which means **peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan** and also said India supports the [Intra-Afghan Negotiations \(IAN\)](#).

Key Points

- **The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP):**

- It was founded in November, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.
- It provides a **platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center**, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region.
- This platform was established to **address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners**.
- The Heart of Asia comprises 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
 - **India is a participating country.**
- Since its inception the process has become a cardinal element in regional cooperation and has created a **platform for Afghanistan’s near and extended neighbors, international supporters and organizations to engage in constructive dialogue** and to **address the existing and emerging regional challenges** through regional cooperation with Afghanistan at its core.

- **Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN):**

- It refers to the **talks between the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents** with the goal of bringing an end to nearly two decades of a conflict that has laid waste to the country and killed tens of thousands of combatants and civilians.
- The participants of intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the **date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire**, including agreement over the **future political roadmap** of Afghanistan.
- The negotiations will cover a variety of issues, including the **rights of women, free speech, and changes to the country’s constitution**.
- The talks would also lay out the **fate of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters** as well as the heavily armed militias belonging to Afghanistan’s warlords who have amassed wealth and power since the Taliban were ousted from power in 2001.

- **Regional Connectivity Initiatives:**

- During the conference, the Afghanistan President appreciated the number of regional connectivity initiatives including the [Chabahar port project](#), as well as the **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline**.

- **India’s Stand:**

- India believes any peace process must be **Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled**, has to respect the **national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan** and preserve the progress made in the establishment of a **democratic Islamic Republic in Afghanistan**.
- The **interests of minorities, women and vulnerable sections** of society must be preserved and the issue of violence across the country and its neighbourhood has to be effectively addressed.

TAPI Pipeline

- TAPI Pipeline, also called **Peace pipeline**, is a 1,814km natural gas pipeline that originates from Turkmenistan and passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan to reach India.
- It aims to monetise Turkmenistan's gas reserves and supply them to neighbouring countries to promote the use of natural gas and improve energy security.
- The project is being developed by **TAPI Pipeline Company (TPCL)**, a consortium established by four individual state-owned gas companies Turkmengaz (Turkmenistan), Afghan Gas (Afghanistan), Interstate Gas Service (Pakistan), and **Gas Authority of India and Indian Oil (India)**.
- The four countries signed an Inter Government Agreement (IGA) and Gas Pipeline Framework Agreements (GPFA) in December 2010 for the development of the pipeline.

// Trans-Afghanistan pipeline

Route of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline



[Source:TH](#)

PM's Visit to Bangladesh

Why in News

The **Prime Minister of India paid a State Visit to Bangladesh** to join the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the [Independence of Bangladesh](#), the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation [Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman](#) and **50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations** between India and Bangladesh.

Key Points

▪ Joint Celebrations of Historical Links:

- Bangladesh thanked India for conferring [Gandhi Peace Prize](#) for the year 2020 on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**.
- Jointly inaugurated the **Bangabandhu - Babu Digital Exhibition** in Dhaka.
- To mark the **50th anniversary of India-Bangladesh friendship**:
 - Both sides released respective **commemorative postage stamps**.
 - Decided to **commemorate 6th December as Maitri Diwas**, the day when India recognized Bangladesh in the year 1971.
 - India announced the establishment of the **Bangabandhu Chair at the University of Delhi**.
- Bangladesh **thanked India for naming the historic road from Mujib Nagar to Nadia** on the Bangladesh-India border as "**Shadhinota Shorok**" commemorating the historic significance of the road during Bangladesh's [Liberation War](#).

▪ Water Resources Cooperation:

- Bangladesh reiterated its long-pending request for concluding the interim agreement on the **sharing of the waters of the Teesta river**.
 - The draft agreement has already been agreed upon by both Governments in January 2011.
- India also requested for early finalization of the draft of the interim agreement for sharing of water of **Feni River**, pending with the Bangladesh side which had been agreed upon by both sides in 2011.
 - Also, requested working towards an early conclusion of the Framework of Interim Agreement on sharing of waters of six common rivers, namely, **Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar**.
- Directed the **Joint Technical Committee** to expeditiously commence the feasibility study of the **Ganges-Padma barrage** for optimum utilization of the Ganges waters received by Bangladesh as per the [Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, 1996](#).



▪ Trade for Growth:

- Stressed the need for **predictability of trade policies, regulations and procedures** and the need for **removal of non-tariff barriers**.
- Stressed the urgent need for up-gradation of infrastructure and facilities of the **Land Customs Stations (LCSs)/Land Ports** in a coordinated manner to facilitate trade between the two countries.
- Reiterated the importance of **harmonization of standards and mutual recognition** of agreements and certificates for enhancing bilateral trade.
 - **Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** would collaborate for the capacity building and development of testing and Lab facilities.
- India congratulated Bangladesh on its **upcoming graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status**.
- **Emphasized on expeditious conclusion** of the ongoing joint study on the prospects of entering into a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.
- Bangladesh invited **Indian investment in the jute mills of Bangladesh** to revitalize and modernize the jute sector.
- India requested early finalization of modalities for implementation of the **Katihar - Parbotipur - Bornagar cross border electricity interconnection**.
- Took stock of progress in the implementation of the **India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline** and unit-1 of the **Maitree Super Thermal Power Project**.

▪ Connectivity for Prosperity:

- India expressed gratitude for Bangladesh's initiative of **revitalizing the pre-1965 rail connectivity**.
- Bangladesh reiterated its eagerness to partner in the ongoing initiative of the **India - Myanmar - Thailand trilateral highway project**.
- Also agreed to an early operationalization of the **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement** through expeditious signing of the Enabling MoU for Bangladesh, India, and Nepal to commence the movement of goods and passengers, with provision for Bhutan to join at a later date.
- India urged for **early operationalization of the trans-shipment Agreement** on the use

of **Chattogram and Mongla Ports** for the Movement of Goods to and from India (**Kolkata to Agartala via Chattogram**).

- India also requested for trans-shipment arrangement in Munshiganj and Pangaon as part of the **Protocol on [Inland Water Transit and Trade](#)**.
- Recently, **Maitree Setu** (between India and Bangladesh) **over River Feni in South Tripura** has been inaugurated.
- Bangladesh offered the use of **Chattogram and Sylhet International Airport**, by the people of North East India, especially of Tripura.
- **Cooperation in Public Health:**
 - Bangladesh thanked the Government of India for giving 3.2 million doses of **[Oxford Astra Zeneca Covishield](#)** vaccine made in India.
- **Border Management and Security Cooperation:**
 - Bangladesh reiterated the request for 1.3 km **Innocent Passage** through river route along with **River Padma**, on humanitarian grounds.
 - India requested for completion of border fencing at all pending sectors at the international border at the earliest, beginning from the Tripura (India) - Bangladesh sector.
 - **Defence Cooperation:** Emphasized on the frequent exchange of programs and enhancing cooperation in **training and capacity building**.
 - India has offered a **USD 500 million line of credit** for defence imports from India into Bangladesh and thus requested for early operationalization of this defense Line of Credit.
 - Welcomed the signing of an MoU on **[Disaster Management, Resilience and Mitigation](#)**.
- **New Areas of Cooperation:**
 - Acknowledged the potential of new and emerging areas of cooperation in cutting edge areas of science, **[artificial intelligence](#), peaceful uses of nuclear technology, [big data](#) and technology enabled services in health and education**.
 - **50 young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh** were invited to visit India and present their ideas to venture capitalists.
- **Partners in the Region and the World:**
 - Agreed to continue working together for common objectives in the **[United Nations](#)** and other multilateral fora.
 - Emphasized that the regional organizations, such as **[SAARC](#)** and **[BIMSTEC](#)** have an important role to play, particularly in the post-**Covid-19** situation.
 - Bangladesh thanked India for convening the **[SAARC leaders Video Conference](#)** in March 2020 and for proposing creation of the **SAARC Emergency Response Fund** to counter effects of the global pandemic in the South Asian region.
 - Bangladesh highlighted that the country would assume chairmanship of the **[Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#)** for the first time in October 2021 and requested the support of India for working towards greater maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean region.
 - India welcomed the **decision of Bangladesh to join the [New Development Bank \(NDB\)](#)**.
- The two Prime Ministers also announced/ unveiled the following:
 - Foundation stone laying ceremony for a **memorial in the honour of the Martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces** who sacrificed their lives during Liberation War of 1971 at Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria.
 - Foundation stone for five packages out of total eight packages of **Rooppur Power Evacuation Project**.
 - Inauguration of **3 border haats, Nalikata (India) - Saydabad (Bangladesh), Ryngku (India) - Bagan Bari (Bangladesh) and Bholagunj (India) - Bholagunj (Bangladesh)**.
 - Border Haats aim at promoting the wellbeing of the people dwelling in remote areas

- across the borders of two countries, by establishing a traditional system of marketing the local produce through local markets.
- Inauguration of **'Mitali Express'** - passenger train connecting Dhaka on Bangladesh side and New Jalpaiguri on the Indian.

[Source:TH](#)

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin

Why in News

Due to adverse impact of [Covid-19](#), **only 5.4% of the sanctioned houses under** the central government's flagship rural housing scheme, **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin**, have **reached completion for the year 2020-2021**.

Key Points

▪ About the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G):

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of **"Housing for All" by 2022**, the erstwhile rural housing scheme **Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)** w.e.f 1st April, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of **Rural development**.
- **Aim:** To **provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families**, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of **March 2022**.
 - To help rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- **Beneficiaries:** People belonging to SCs/STs, freed bonded labourers and non-SC/ST categories, widows or next-of-kin of defence personnel killed in action, ex servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces, disabled persons and minorities.
- **Selection of Beneficiaries:** Through a three stage validation - Socio Economic Caste Census 2011, Gram Sabha, and geo-tagging.
- **Cost Sharing:** The cost of unit assistance is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio **60:40 in plain areas** and **90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states**.
- **Features:**
 - The minimum size of the house has been increased to 25 sq.mt (from 20sq.mt) with a hygienic cooking space.
 - The unit assistance has been increased from Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 1.20 lakh in plain and from Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1.30 lakh in hilly states.
 - The assistance for construction of toilets shall be leveraged through convergence with [Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin \(SBM-G\)](#), [MGNREGS](#) or any other dedicated source of funding.
 - Convergence for **piped drinking water, electricity connection, LPG gas connection etc.** different Government programmers are also to be attempted.

▪ Performance of the Scheme:

- **Only 55% of the construction** target has been completed.
 - Of the **2.28 crore houses to be built** for the rural poor, less than **1.27 crore had**

been built by January 2021.

- **Money** has been sanctioned to **almost 85% of beneficiaries**.
- This scheme has helped in **employment generation**. Many states provided employment to their migrant labourers during lock down.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban

- **Launch:** 25th June 2015, intends to provide housing for all in urban areas by year 2022.
- **Implemented by:** Ministry of **Housing and Urban Affairs**
- **Features:**
 - **Addresses Urban housing shortage among the Urban Poor** including the Slum Dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to eligible urban poor.
 - The Mission **covers the entire urban area** consisting of Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Special Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities or any such authority under State legislation which is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.
 - All houses under PMAY(U) **have basic amenities like toilet, water supply, electricity and kitchen**.
 - The Mission **promotes women empowerment** by providing the ownership of houses in the name of female members or in joint name.
 - **Preference is also given to differently abled persons, senior citizens, SCs, STs, OBCs, Minority, single women, transgender** and other weaker & vulnerable sections of the society.
- **Divided into Four Verticals:**
 - In-situ Rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers using land as a resource through private participation.
 - Credit Linked Subsidy.
 - Affordable Housing in Partnership.
 - Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancement.

[Source: TH](#)

Revival of Millet Cultivation

Why in News

An [International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#) supported initiative to **revive Kodo and Kutki Millets cultivation**, started in the year 2013-14 in Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh, has given new life to the forgotten crops.

- IFAD is a specialized agency of the [United Nations](#) and was one of the major outcomes of the **1974 World Food Conference**.
- Founded in 1977, IFAD **focuses on rural poverty reduction**, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to **eliminate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition**.

Key Points

- **About the Project:**
 - **Beginning:**

- The project was started with **1,497 women-farmers from 40 villages** - mostly from the **Gonda and Baiga tribes** - growing these two minor millets (Kodo and Kutki) on 749 acres.
- **Seed and Training:**
 - The identified farmers were **supplied good-quality seeds and trained by scientists from the Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University** in Jabalpur and the local Krishi Vigyan Kendra – on field preparation, line-sowing (as opposed to conventional broadcasting by hand) and application of compost, zinc, bavistin fungicide and other specific plant protection chemicals.
- **Self Help Groups:**
 - A federation of the **farmers' self-help groups** undertook procurement of the produce and also its mechanical de-hulling (the traditional manual pounding process to remove husk from the grain was time-consuming).
- **Impact:**
 - Helped in increasing the **number of farmers growing kodo-kutki** in the project area to **14,301 in 2019-20**.
 - Helped in increasing the acreage to 14,876 acres.
 - Helped in **meeting nutritional goals** (fighting malnourishment among children).
 - Helped in **reviving millet cultivation** (crop yields are 1.5-2 times higher than before).

Millets

▪ About:

- Millets are often referred to as **Superfood** and its production can be seen as an approach for **sustainable agriculture** and a healthy world.

▪ Millets in India:

- The three major millet crops currently grown in India are **jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet)**.
 - Along with that, India grows a rich array of bio-genetically diverse and **indigenous varieties of “small millets” like kodo, kutki, chenna and sanwa**.
- **Major producers** include Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana.

▪ Need for Reviving Millet Cultivation:

◦ Nutritional Security:

- Millets are **less expensive and nutritionally superior** to wheat & rice owing to their high protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals like iron content.
- Millets are also **rich in calcium and magnesium**.

- **For example**, Ragi is known to have the highest calcium content among all the food grains.

- Its **high iron content can fight high prevalence of anaemia** in Indian women of reproductive age and infants.

◦ Climate Resilient:

- They are also harder and **drought-resistant crops**, which has to do with their **short growing season** (70-100 days, as against 120-150 days for paddy/wheat) and **lower water requirement** (350-500 mm versus 600-1,200 mm).

◦ Economic Security:

- As low investment is needed for production of millets, these can prove to be a

sustainable income source for farmers.

- **Can Tackle Health Issues:**

- Millets can help **tackle lifestyle problems and health challenges such as obesity and diabetes** as they are **gluten-free and have a low glycemic index** (a relative ranking of carbohydrates in foods according to how they affect blood glucose levels).

- Millets are rich in [antioxidants](#).

- **Challenges:**

- **Preference for Wheat:**

- Wheat has gluten proteins that swell and form networks on adding water to the flour, making the dough more cohesive and elastic.
 - The resultant chapattis come out soft, which isn't possible with millets that are gluten-free.

- **Increased Demand for Processed Food:**

- India has seen a jump in consumer demand for **ultra-processed and ready-to-eat products**, which are high in sodium, sugar, trans-fats and even some carcinogens.
- With the **intense marketing of processed foods**, even the rural population started perceiving mill-processed rice and wheat as more aspirational.

- **National Food Security Act Promoting Other Grains:**

- In rural India, the [National Food Security Act of 2013](#) entitles three-fourths of all households to **5 kg of wheat or rice** per person per month at Rs 2 and Rs 3 per kg, respectively, thus **reducing the demand for millets**.

- **Indian Initiatives:**

- **Promoting Millets:**

- The Union Agriculture Ministry, in April 2018, **declared millets as “Nutri-Cereals”**, considering their “high nutritive value” and also “anti-diabetic properties”.
- 2018 was also observed as **‘National Year of Millets’**.

- **Increase in MSP:**

- The government has hiked the [Minimum Support Price \(MSP\)](#) of Millets, which came as a big price incentive for farmers.
- Further, to provide a steady market for the produce, the government has included millets in the public distribution system.

- **Input Support:**

- The government has introduced provision of seed kits and inputs to farmers, building value chains through [Farmer Producer Organisations](#) and supporting the marketability of millets.

- **International Initiative:**

- The **United Nation General Assembly** adopted an India-sponsored resolution to mark 2023 as the [International Year of Millets](#).

Way Forward

- Farming of millets **deserves encouragement** especially in view of their climate resilience, short cropping duration and ability to grow on poor soils, hilly terrains and with little rain.
- Because of their accessibility to the poor, they **can play an essential role in providing nourishment to people across all income categories** and supporting climate adaptation of

rained farming systems.

[Source:IE](#)

Asteroid Apophis

Why in News

Recently, the [National Aeronautics and Space Administration \(NASA\)](#) has ruled out the possibility of the dreaded [asteroid Apophis](#) causing any damage to the Earth for the next 100 years.

Key Points

▪ Size:

- Apophis is a **near-Earth asteroid** with a relatively **large size** (about 335 meters wide).

▪ Name & Discovery:

- Named after the ancient **Egyptian god of chaos and darkness**, it was **discovered in 2004**, after which NASA had said that it was one of the asteroids that posed the greatest threat to Earth.

- Apophis was predicted to come threateningly close to us in the years 2029 and 2036, but NASA later ruled these events out.
- However, there were still **fears about a possible collision in 2068**.

▪ Near Earth Flight:

- Recently, the asteroid flew past Earth on **5th March 2021**, coming **within 17 million km of our planet**. During this approach, scientists used radar observations to study in detail the asteroid's orbit around the sun.

▪ Impact if it Hits Earth:



- Asteroid would hit with **1,200,000 kilotons of kinetic energy**
- For comparison, the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 exploded with the force of **15 kilotons of TNT**
- Impact would decimate an area of **thousands of square miles**
- Would leave a **3.2-mile crater**

Crater **3.2 - miles**

Explosion **2,000 square miles**

Asteroids

▪ About:

- Asteroids are **rocky objects that orbit the Sun**, much smaller than planets.
 - They are also called minor planets.
- According to NASA, **9,94,383 is the count of known asteroids**, the remnants from the formation of the solar system over 4.6 billion years ago.

▪ Categorization: Asteroids are divided into **three classes**:

◦ **First Group:**

- Those found in the **main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter**, which is estimated to contain somewhere between 1.1-1.9 million asteroids.

◦ **Second Group:**

- It is that of trojans, which are **asteroids that share an orbit with a larger planet**. NASA reports the presence of Jupiter, Neptune and Mars trojans. In 2011, they reported an **Earth trojan** as well.

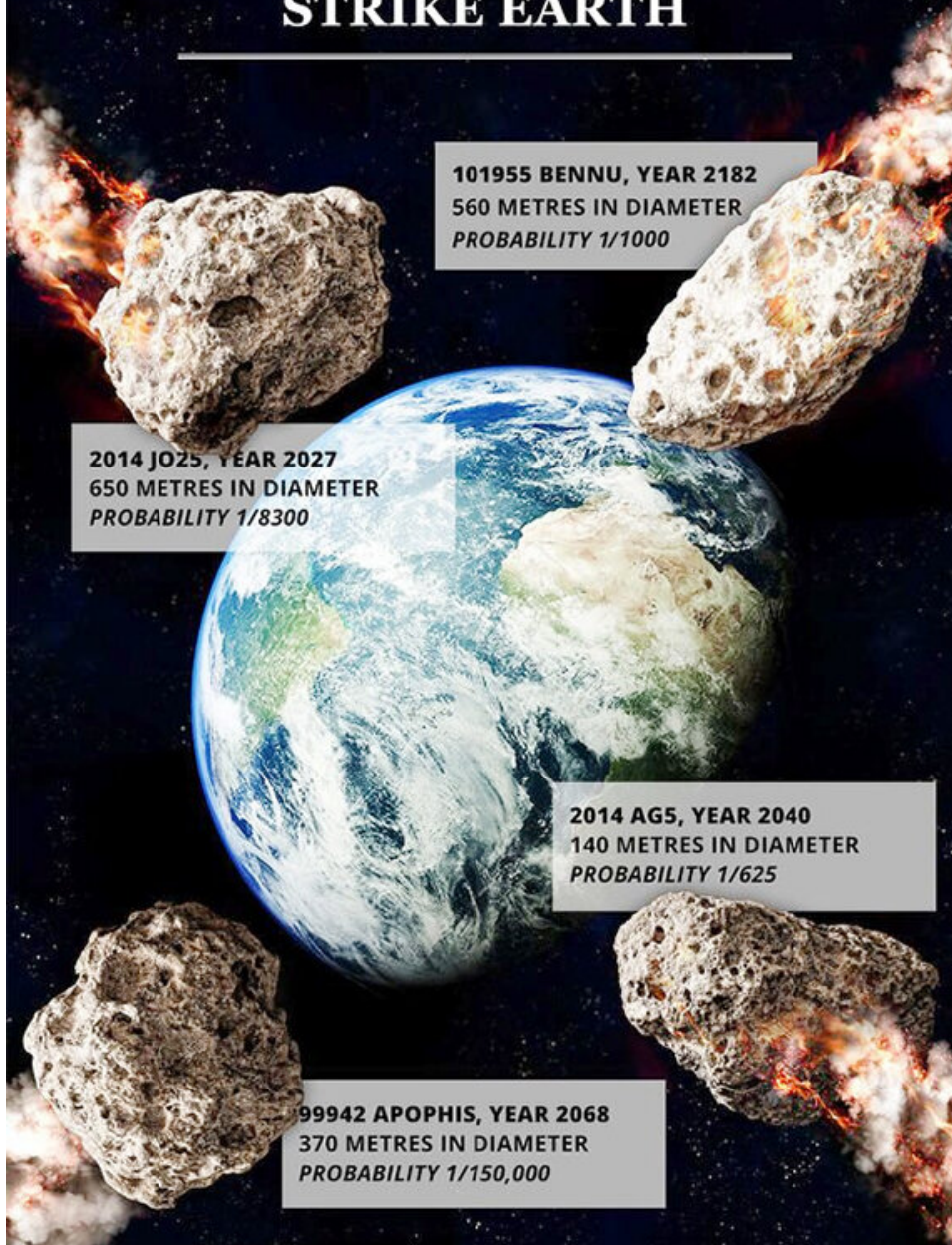
◦ **Third Group:**

- It is **Near-Earth Asteroids (NEA)**, which have orbits that pass close by the Earth. Those that cross the Earth's orbit are called Earth-crossers. More than 10,000 such asteroids are known, out of which over 1,400 are classified as **Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHAs)**.
- NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Study (CNEOS) determines the times and distances of these objects, when their approach to the Earth is close, through the Asteroid Watch Widget.

Potentially Hazardous Asteroids

- It means that an **asteroid has the potential to make threatening close approaches to the Earth**.
- Specifically, all asteroids with a **Minimum Orbit Intersection Distance (MOID)** of 0.05 AU (which is about 7,480,000 Km) or less and an Absolute Magnitude (H) of 22.0 (about 150 mt in diameter) or less are considered PHAs.
 - **Minimum Orbit Intersection Distance** is a method for calculating the minimum distance between two almost overlapping elliptical orbits.
 - The **Astronomical Unit (AU)** is the distance between the Earth and the Sun and is roughly 150 million km.
 - The **absolute magnitude** is a measure of the star's luminosity i.e. the total amount of energy radiated by the star every second.
- **Apothis** is categorised as a PHA.

FOUR ASTEROIDS THAT COULD STRIKE EARTH



Source: IE

Tata - Mistry Judgement

Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) overturned the [National Company Law Appellate Tribunal \(NCLAT\) decision](#) and upheld **Tata Group's decision to remove Cyrus Pallonji Mistry as the Executive Chairman and Director of Tata Sons.**

Key Points

▪ Supreme Court Observations:

- **Minority shareholders** or their representatives are **not automatically entitled to a seat** on the private company's board like a small shareholder's representative.
- The provisions contained in the [Companies Act 2013](#) only protects the **rights of small shareholders** of listed companies by asking such companies to have on their board at least one director elected by such small shareholders.
- Since the **Mistry family and the Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) Group** are not small shareholders, but minority shareholders, there is no statutory provision which gives them the **“right to claim proportionate representation,”** on the board of Tata Sons.
- **Private companies**, which have **minority shareholders**, are **free to make an enabling provision** but are **under no statutory obligation** to give minority shareholder seats on the board.

Minority Shareholders

- They are the equity holders of a firm **who do not enjoy the voting power of the firm by virtue of his or her below 50% ownership** of the firm's equity capital.

Small Shareholders

- According to the Companies Act, small shareholders is a shareholder or group of shareholders who hold shares of nominal value of not more than Rs. 20,000.

The Companies Act 2013

- It is an Indian company law which regulates incorporation of a company, responsibilities of a company, directors, dissolution of a company.

▪ Significance of the Judgement:

- Though the judgment does not directly impact the right of minority shareholders, such shareholders will have to ensure that they have a contract with the majority shareholders or the promoters of the company to ensure they have adequate representation on the board.

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal

- It was **constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013** for hearing appeals against the orders of [National Company Law Tribunal \(NCLT\)](#).
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under the [Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 \(IBC\)](#).
 - NCLAT also hears appeals against the orders passed by **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India**.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order passed by the [Competition Commission of India \(CCI\)](#).

[Source: IE](#)

Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR

Why in News

Recently, **Special Forces of India and the USA** conducted the joint military exercise 'VAJRA PRAHAR 2021' in Himachal Pradesh.

- Earlier, India and the USA navy had carried out a two-day **Passage Exercise (PASSEX)** in the eastern Indian Ocean Region.

Key Points

▪ About the Exercise:

- The joint exercise by the Special Forces of both the countries is **conducted alternatively between India and the United States.**
 - Special Forces are the units of a country's armed forces that undertake covert, counterterrorist, and other specialized operations.
- This is the **11th edition** of the exercise conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, **Himachal Pradesh.**
 - The **10th edition** of VAJRA PRAHAR was **held in 2019 at Seattle, USA.**

▪ Aim:

- To share the best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics as also to improve interoperability between the Special Forces of both nations.

▪ Other Exercises of India with the USA:

- Exercise Yudh Abhyas (Army).
- **Cope India** (Air Force).
- **Red Flag** (USA's multilateral air exercise).
- **Malabar Exercise** (trilateral naval exercise of India, USA and Japan).

Source: PIB

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