

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

1ST APRIL, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHTS

- **India's economy is expected to grow at 10.1% for the year starting April 1, 2021, as the vaccine roll-out drives activity in contact-intensive sectors, as per the World Bank's South Asia Economic Focus South Asia Vaccinates report. However, given the significant uncertainty around epidemiological and policy factors, real GDP growth could range from 7.5% to 12.5%, stabilising at 6-7% in the medium term, it said.**
- **Partially reversing a two-year-old decision to suspend all trade with India, Pakistan announced that it would allow the import of cotton and sugar from across the border. The decision follows the Line of Control (LoC) ceasefire announced by India and Pakistan in February, and a number of moves seen as part of a larger dialogue process to defreeze ties.**
- **Following a plea alleging violation of environmental clearances by a few builders in Gurugram, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a committee comprising officials from the Environment Ministry, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Board to look into the petition.**
- **The government has sharply slashed the rates on all small savings instruments for the first quarter of 2021-22, bringing the rate of return on the Public Provident Fund down from 7.1% to 6.4% and effecting cuts ranging from 40 basis points (0.4%) to 110 basis points (1.1%) through a notification.**
- **Elite troops in Niger thwarted an "attempted coup" on Wednesday, a security source said, just two days before the historic inauguration of Mohamed Bazoum as President of the chronically unstable Sahel nation.**

PRADHAN MANTRI AAWAS YOJANA-GRAMIN

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.**
4. This **scheme has helped in employment generation. Many states provided employment to their migrant labourers** during lock down.

REVIVAL OF MILLET CULTIVATION

1. 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.
2. **IFAD is a specialized agency of the United Nations and was one of the major outcomes of the 1974 World Food Conference.**
3. Founded in 1977, IFAD focuses on rural poverty reduction, working with poor rural populations in developing countries to eliminate poverty, hunger, and malnutrition.
3. The project was started with 1,497 women-farmers from 40 villages – mostly from the Gonda and Baiga tribes.
4. 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 and Helped in reviving millet cultivation.

ASTEROID APOPHIS

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Apophis was predicted to come threateningly close to us in the years 2029 and 2036, but NASA later ruled these events out.
4. Potentially Hazardous Asteroids (PHA) 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. **Apophis is categorised as a PHA.**

EXERCISE VAJRA PRAHAR

1. Special Forces of India and the USA conducted the joint military exercise 'VAJRA PRAHAR 2021' in Himachal Pradesh.
2. This is the 11th edition of the exercise conducted at **Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh**, Himachal Pradesh.