

Asteroid Apophis

April 2, 2021

In News: Apophis was predicted to come threateningly close to us in the years 2029 and 2036, but NASA later ruled these events out. But still fears about a possible collision in 2068.

About Asteroid Apophis

- The NASA space agency has ruled out the possibility of the dreaded asteroid Apophis causing any damage to the Earth for the next 100 years.
- Named after the ancient Egyptian god of chaos and darkness Apophis.
- 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 measures 340 metres across— comparable to the size of the huge ship.

What are asteroids?

- Asteroids are rocky objects that orbit the Sun, much smaller than planets. They are also called minor planets.
- According to NASA, 994,383 is the count of known asteroids, the remnants from the formation of the solar system over 4.6 billion years ago.

Asteroids are divided into three classes.

- **First**, 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**, the group 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**, classification 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).