



C.A Dated On 29-04-2019

GS-1

Plate tectonics:

Why in News?

When the landmass that is now the Indian subcontinent slammed into Asia about 50 million years ago, the oxygen in the world's oceans increased, altering the conditions for life, scientists say.

The collision was already known to have changed the configuration of the continents, the landscape, global climate and more.

What does Study say?

- Scientist used microscopic seashells to create a record of ocean nitrogen over a period from 70 million years ago – shortly before the extinction of the dinosaurs – until 30 million years ago.
- In addition to being the most abundant gas in the atmosphere, nitrogen is key to all life on Earth.
- Every organism on Earth requires “fixed” nitrogen – sometimes called “biologically available nitrogen.”
- Nitrogen has two stable isotopes: ^{15}N and ^{14}N . In oxygen-poor waters, decomposition uses up “fixed” nitrogen.
- This occurs with a slight preference for the lighter nitrogen isotope, ^{14}N , so the ocean's ^{15}N -to- ^{14}N ratio reflects its oxygen levels.
- That ratio is incorporated into tiny sea creatures called foraminifera during their lives, and then preserved in their shells when they die.
- By analysing their fossils researchers were able to reconstruct the ^{15}N -to- ^{14}N ratio of the ancient ocean, and therefore identify past changes in oxygen levels.

Significance:

- Oxygen controls the distribution of marine organisms, with oxygen-poor waters being bad for most ocean life.
- Many past climate warming events caused decrease in ocean oxygen that limited the habitats of sea creatures, from microscopic plankton to the fish and whales that feed on them.



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- Scientists trying to predict the impact of current and future global warming have warned that low levels of ocean oxygen could decimate marine ecosystems, including important fish populations.
- When the researchers assembled their unprecedented geologic record of ocean nitrogen, they found that in the 10 million years after dinosaurs went extinct, the 15N-to-14N ratio was high, suggesting that ocean oxygen levels were low.
- They first thought that the warm climate of the time was responsible, as oxygen is less soluble in warmer water.

The collision of India with Asia closed off an ancient sea called the Tethys, disturbing the continental shelves and their connections with the open ocean.

GS-2

GI tag:

Why in News?

The Delhi High Court has struck down the decision of the Central government restricting the famously aromatic basmati rice production to only seven States in the Indo-Gangetic plains.

The High Court's verdict came on the Madhya Pradesh government's plea to include 13 districts in the State under the Geographical Indications (GI) category for basmati rice.

Background:

- The Ministry of [Agriculture](#) had through two Office Memorandums (OM) of May 2008 and February 2014 confined the GI certification for basmati to rice grown in the Indo-Gangetic plains in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.



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- GI certification gives recognition and several protections to a basmati rice producer and help in maintaining the specific qualities of the rice grown in that particular region.
- The Madhya Pradesh government contended that the two OMs were outside the scope of the Seeds Act, 1966. It additionally argued that the OMs encroach upon its power to pass laws in relation to agriculture, which is a State subject.
- The 2008 OM of the Ministry set forth the standards of the 'basmati' variety of rice.

About GI Tag:

- A [geographical indication](#) (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country).
- [India](#), as a member of the [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO), enacted the [Geographical Indications of Goods \(Registration and Protection\) Act, 1999](#) has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003.
- GIs have been defined under Article 22(1) of the [WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights \(TRIPS\)](#) Agreement as: "Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin."
- The GI tag ensures that none other than those registered as authorised users (or at least those residing inside the geographic territory) are allowed to use the popular product name.
- [Darjeeling tea](#) became the first [GI tagged](#) product in India, in 2004-05, since then by october 2018, 321 had been added to the list.

Allegations against Judiciary :



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The story so far:

The allegations made by a former Supreme Court employee against the Chief Justice of India have brought the focus on the mechanism that exists to examine charges of misconduct against members of the higher judiciary.

What exactly is the procedure involved and how was it devised?

How are allegations of misconduct against judges of High Courts and the Supreme Court dealt with?

- Allegations of misconduct against serving judges of the superior judiciary, that is, the various high courts and the Supreme Court, are dealt with through an 'in-house procedure'.
- Most complaints may pertain to judicial conduct, and may be at the behest of parties aggrieved by the outcome of their cases.
- However, some may concern the personal conduct of judges.
- Two purposes are served by the adoption of an internal procedure to deal with such complaints: when the allegations are examined by the judge's peers, outside agencies are kept out, and the independence of the judiciary is maintained.
- Second, awareness about the existence of a mechanism to examine such complaints will preserve the faith of the people in the impartiality and independence of the judicial process.
- in-house procedure envisages that false and frivolous allegations can be rejected at an early stage and only those that are not baseless, and may require a deeper probe, are taken up for [inquiry](#).

When was the in-house procedure adopted?

- A five-judge committee was formed to devise the procedure.
- The report of the committee was adopted by a resolution of the Full Court on December 15, 1999.
- This procedure has been adhered to since then. However, the in-house procedure was not in the public domain for many years.
- In 2014, a Supreme Court Bench directed the court's registry to make the in-house procedure public for the sake of transparency.



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- The court was then dealing with a serious allegation made by a woman district and sessions court judge that she faced harassment from a sitting judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

How does the in-house procedure work? What are the various steps?

- When a complaint is received against a High Court judge, the Chief Justice concerned has to examine it.
- If it is frivolous or concerns a judicial matter, she may just file the complaint and inform the Chief Justice of India.
- If she considers it serious, she should get a response from the judge concerned. If she is satisfied with the response and feels no further action is required, she may close the matter and keep the CJI informed.
- However, if the CJI feels a deeper probe is needed, she should send the complaint as well as the judge's response to the CJI, with her own comments, for further action.

What are the possible outcomes from the inquiry committee?

- If it finds that there is substance in the allegations, the committee can either hold that the misconduct is serious enough to warrant removal from office, or that it is not so serious as to warrant removal.
- In the former case, it will call for initiation of proceedings to remove the judge. The judge concerned would be advised to resign or take voluntary retirement.
- If the judge is unwilling to quit, the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned would be advised to withdraw judicial work from him, and the President of India and the Prime Minister would be informed of the situation.
- Such an action may clear the way for Parliament to begin the political process for impeachment.
- In case, the committee finds substance in the allegation, but it is not grave enough to warrant removal from office, the judge concerned would be advised accordingly, and the committee's report will be placed on record.



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China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Why in News?

In an annex tagged with the Joint Communiqué of the Leaders' Roundtable of the BRF, which concluded in Beijing on Saturday, the Chinese foreign ministry website has not listed the BCIM as a project covered by the BRI—the giant connectivity initiative spearheaded by [China](#) to revive the ancient Silk Road across Eurasia and Africa.

Why so?

- India's decision to skip the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) may have led to the exclusion of the Bangladesh- China- India- [Myanmar](#) (BCIM) Economic corridor from the list of projects covered by the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) umbrella.
- Instead, South Asia is covered by three major undertakings—the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), the Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Multi-dimensional Connectivity Network, including Nepal-China cross-border railway, as well as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Issues raised by India:

- Citing "sovereignty" concerns, India, for the second time, has not officially participated in the BRF, as CPEC—a flagship of the BRI—passes through Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

About BCIM:

- The 2800 km BCIM corridor proposes to link Kunming in China's Yunnan province with Kolkata, passing through nodes such as Mandalay in Myanmar and Dhaka in [Bangladesh](#) before heading to Kolkata.



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Arms Trade Treaty (ATT):

Why in news?

Continuing Washington's drift from multilateralism, US President Donald Trump has announced that he was withdrawing the country from the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

Why such Move?

- While the US has rules in place to govern its arms transactions, those countries did not have any and would not be governed by the treaty either.
- Only 130 of the 193 members of the UN have signed the treaty, and of them only 101 ratified it putting it just over the threshold of 100 to come into effect.
- The official said the British government is being sued by an NGO, Campaign Against Arms Trade citing the treaty to stop arms sales to Saudi Arabia, a Washington ally, and implied that the US could face similar challenges if it continued to be a part of the ATT.

About ATT:

- Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2013, the ATT covers all types of weapons and seeks to stop them from reaching regimes abusing human rights or parties in civil wars, armed and terrorist groups.

India and ATT:

- By pulling out of the ATT, the US joins India, which has not signed the treaty.
- One of the arguments made by India in 2013 against the treaty was that New Delhi had "strong and effective national export controls" on military hardware to ensure they don't fall into the wrong hands.
- Neither have Russia and China, which are major arms exporters, signed it.



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