

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS**New Norms For Reward To Whistleblowers**

The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has come out with a new mechanism to reward **whistle-blowers** and other informants for sharing information about insider trading cases.

Important Points:

- It would be mandatory to disclose the source of information. At the same time, confidentiality regarding the identity of the informant would be protected.
- Reward would be given in case the information provided leads to a **disgorgement of at least Rs. 1 crore** in accordance with the “**Prohibition of Insider Trading (PIT) Regulations**”.
- **Disgorgement** is repayment of ill-gotten gains that is imposed on wrongdoers by the courts. This implies that funds that were received through illegal or unethical business transactions are disgorged, or paid back, with interest to those affected by the action.
- The **Office of Informant Protection (OIP)** has been established by the SEBI as an independent office for receiving and processing the **Voluntarily Information Disclosure Form**. The OIP would serve as a medium of exchange between the informant or legal representative and the SEBI.
- An informant would have to voluntarily submit original information pertaining to any violation of insider trading laws to the OIP, through a VID form. He has to reveal his identity at the time of submission of the VID form.
- In case, the information is submitted through a legal representative, the identity of the informant is not required to be revealed at the time of submission of VID form. However, the identity of the informant would be required to be revealed prior to payment of reward, if any.

Insider Trading

It is the act of trading, directly or indirectly, in **the securities of a publicly listed company** by any person, who may or may not be managing the affairs of such company, based on certain information, not available to the public at large, that can influence the market price of the securities of such company.

Whistleblowing

- According to **the Companies Act, 2013**, whistleblowing is an action aimed at drawing the attention of stakeholders to instances of unethical practices in an organization.
- A whistleblower can be anyone who chooses to expose wrong practices and has evidence to support the allegations. They can be either from within or outside the organization—such as current and former employees, shareholders, external auditors, and lawyers.
- In India, whistleblowers are protected by **the WhistleBlowers Protection Act, 2014**. The law provides for the protection of their identity and also has strict norms to prevent their victimization.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Reduced Tiger Mortality in 3 Years**

According to the Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the number of tiger deaths in 2019 has decreased for **the first time** in three years.

Key Points

- The number of tiger deaths recorded in previous years are 122 (2016), 115 (2017), 100 (2018) and 95 (2019).
- **Decreasing tiger mortality** has emerged parallelly with the **increasing numbers of tigers** in the country.
- The tiger census report (2019), reported an increase in the number of tigers compared to 2014.
- For 2019, 84 cases of tiger deaths and 11 cases of seizures (a tiger is presumed dead on the basis of body parts seized by authorities) are reported in the country.
- **Madhya Pradesh**, which has the **highest number of tigers** in the country (526, as per the last census), has recorded **the highest number of tiger deaths** (31) followed by Maharashtra (18), Karnataka (12) and Uttarakhand (10).
- Deaths were also recorded from non-tiger bearing states like Gujarat, where a tiger had strayed into the State and died.

Reasons of Tiger Death:

Poaching: It is the main reason for tiger deaths in the country followed by other natural reasons.

The data on tiger mortality also confirms 22 cases of poaching in the country.

Location: Tigers are most vulnerable when they are outside reserves as they are not under surveillance.

Almost over 70% of cases of poaching have been reported outside tiger reserves.

Causes of Decline in Tiger Mortality

Use of Technology: The reduced tiger mortalities are due to usage of **technology for surveillance, good management of tiger reserves** and a lot of **awareness and education** programmes on tiger conservation.

M-STrIPES (Monitoring System for Tigers-Intensive Protection & Ecological Status) patrolling app is deployed and used in every tiger reserve.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, ARCHITECTURE

Odissi Dance

Odissi dance is one of the **classical dances** of India. It is **indigenous to Orissa**, eastern India, and follows the principles of the **Natya-shastra**.

Evolution:

- The dance has its origin in the temples.
- The carvings found at the **Udayagiri Monastery** denote that Odissi was patronised as early as the 2nd Century BCE and the trend continued unabated until about the 16th Century AD.
- After surviving the tumultuous years from 16th century AD till independence, Odissi underwent a renaissance of sorts which helped it become the global phenomenon as it is today.
- The classical music and dance form of Odisha was prefixed with “Odissi” by noted Odia poet **Kabichandra Kalicharan Pattanayak**, who was the centre of the cultural revival of Odisha post-independence, to retain its distinct identity.

Dance Techniques:

- Odissi dance form can be broken down to **the movement of the head, bust and torso** and the accompanying **gestures and expressions**.
- The techniques of movement are built around the two basic postures of the **Chowk** and the **Tribhanga**. The chowk is a position imitating a square - a very masculine stance with the weight of the body equally balanced. The tribhanga is a very **feminine stance** where the body is deflected at the neck, torso and the knees.
- Odissi dance deals largely with the love theme of **Radha and Krishna**.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Extraocular Vision

For the first time, researchers have shown that a species of **brittle stars** can see even though it does not have eyes.

Key Points

- The ability to see without eyes is known as **extraocular vision**.
- The **red brittle star (Ophiocoma wendtii)** has become only **the second creature**, after a **sea urchin** species, known to have the extraocular vision (barring rare cases in other species).
- In sea urchins and brittle stars, researchers suspect that extraocular vision is facilitated by the **photoreceptor cells** found on their bodies.
- The researchers suggest that a brittle star sees with the help of light-sensing cells that cover its entire body. These light-sensing cells give the brittle star visual stimuli, allowing it to recognise coarse structures such as rocks.
- Another peculiar feature of the red brittle star is its **signature colour change**. While the creature is deep red during the day, it changes its colour to beige at night.
- The researchers think that there may be a link between their **extraocular vision and colour changing** abilities since the responses they saw in the creatures tested during the day, disappeared in those that were tested at night.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**First National Conference on Intersex Human Rights**

Recently, the first national conference on intersex human rights was organised by **Srishti Madurai** in partnership with **Intersex Asia** in **New Delhi**.

- The conference sought a national ban on unnecessary medical surgeries conducted on children with intersex traits and appealed to the Union government to protect their human rights.
- This demand follows **Tamil Nadu's** ban on **normative surgeries** on infants and children, except in life-threatening situations in August 2019.
- If the ban will be adopted nationally, India will become **the third country** to protect the rights of intersex children after **Malta** and **Taiwan**.

Key Points

The term intersex is often confused with **transgender** but the two in-fact have very different meanings.

Transgender: Individuals who identify as transgender or transexual have a gender that is different from the one traditionally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Intersex: It refers to people born with biological or physical characteristics that are more diverse than stereotypical male or female bodies.

The **World Health Organisation (WHO)** and the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** have called upon the Member States to **end invasive** and **irreversible medical surgeries** and other medical treatment on intersex children.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Identify the issues related to stubble burning. Mention how an effective policy planning can convert crisis of stubble burning into opportunity.

Ans. Stubble (parali) burning is the act of setting fire to crop residue to remove them from the field to sow the next crop. It has been the primary reason for air pollution in Delhi NCR region every year before the onset of winters. Recently, the Supreme Court had ordered the Centre to prepare a comprehensive national scheme, in consultation with the States, within three months to wean small and marginal farmers away from stubble burning.

Issues related to stubble burning:

Air pollution: Open stubble burning emits large amounts of toxic pollutants in the atmosphere which contain harmful gases like methane (CH₄), Carbon Monoxide (CO), Volatile organic compound (VOC) and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Lack of effective alternatives: Farmers are not given adequate policy support in the form of acquisition of straw or other monetary incentives. Also, short sowing season for the next crop makes it a compulsion of farmers to resort to stubble burning.

Lack of mechanization: Farm equipment like 'Happy Seeders' are limited in number and do not cater to the needs of millions of farmers in the region.

Adverse Impact of Laws: Implementation of the Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act (2009) made the time period of stubble burning coincident with the onset of winter in Northern India.

Impact on agriculture: Burning husk on ground destroys the nutrients in the soil, making it less fertile. Also, the heat generated by stubble burning penetrates into the soil, leading to the loss of moisture and useful microbes.

Effective policy measures to convert crisis into opportunity:

- From parali (stubble), high-grade organic fertilizers can be prepared by mixing with cow dung and few natural enzymes.
- The total amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur in the parali burnt annually in Northwest India is about seven lakh tonnes, valued at Rs 1,000 crore.
- Along with the above-mentioned nutrients, organic carbon is also destroyed during stubble burning.

- These nutrients, if successfully utilized in organic manures, can also reduce the risk of cancer in Punjab by reducing the levels of carcinogens caused by chemical fertilizers in the soil.
- Chhattisgarh model of 'gauthans' can be replicated which is a dedicated five-acre plot, held in common by each village, where all the unused parali is collected through parali daan (people's donations) and is converted into organic fertiliser by mixing with cow dung and few natural enzymes. This also helps in employment generation in villages.
- Using straw for electricity generation is another productive way of generating wealth from residue.
- USA-based New Generation Power International has proposed to set up 1000 MW biomass energy generating plants in Punjab to address stubble burning.
- The company plans to set up 200 plants, each having 5 MW capacity, which will use the stubble as raw material.

Conclusion

Green revolution policies and push for exports of highly water-intensive rice by the government have skewed the cropping pattern in the regions of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh. Hence, in the longer time span, shifting cropping pattern away from paddy to maize, cotton, fruits or vegetables in Punjab, Haryana and UP should be the way forward.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

1. The northeast monsoon generally brings rain to
 1. Tamil Nadu
 2. Puducherry
 3. Kerala
 Select the correct code:

a) 1 and 2	b) 2 and 3	c) 1 and 3	d) All of the above
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2. 'Palau' is located in

a) Pacific Ocean	b) Indian Ocean
c) Atlantic Ocean	d) Arctic Ocean
3. Consider the following statements with respect to 'GEMINI'
 1. It aims to disseminate emergency information and communication on disaster warnings, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ) and Ocean States Forecasts (OSF) to fishermen.
 2. It was launched by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and Airport Authority of India (AAI).
 Select the correct statements

a) 1 Only	b) 2 Only	c) Both	d) None
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4. Which of the following pairs is/are correctly matched?
 1. Cyclone 'PABUK' – Northeast and adjoining east central Arabian sea
 2. Cyclone 'FANI' – Southwest Bay & adjoining Southeast of Bengal
 3. Cyclone 'HIKAA' – Andaman Sea
 Select the correct code:

a) 1 and 2	b) 2 Only	c) 1 and 3	d) 1, 2 and 3
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5. Consider the following statements with respect to 'Nageswaraswamy Temple'.
 1. It is an ancient Chola temple, constructed by Aditya Chola.
 2. It was built in the Kalinga region.
 Select the correct statements

a) 1 Only	b) 2 Only	c) Both	d) None
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