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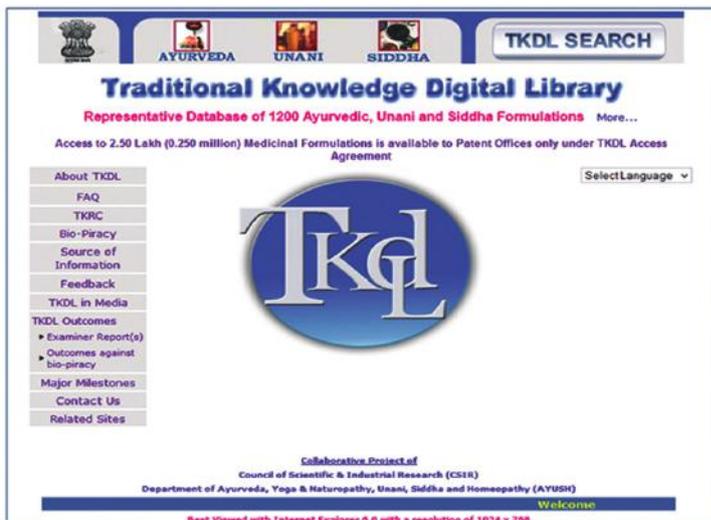
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DIGITAL LIBRARY

Why in news?

- Recently the Ministry of AYUSH and CSIR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science.
- The MoU also encompass the promotion of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library.

ABOUT TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DIGITAL LIBRARY:

- The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) is an Indian digital knowledge repository of the traditional knowledge, especially about medicinal plants and formulations used in Indian systems of medicine.
- It was set up in 2001, as collaboration between the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the MINISTRY OF AYUSH.
- The objective of the library is to protect the ancient and traditional knowledge of the country from exploitation through biopiracy and unethical patents, by documenting it electronically and classifying it as per international patent classification systems.
- The knowledge obtained from ancient Indian texts is stored in 34 million A4 size pages and translated into five foreign languages – in Japanese, English, Spanish, German and French.
- TKDL has identified more than 1,000 cases of biopiracy of India's TK in recent years. In those cases, patent claims were withdrawn or cancelled by the patent offices.



Despite SC directive, State yet to get Civil Services Board

In News:

- The absence of a State Civil Services Board in Tamil Nadu, despite a direction by the Supreme Court to constitute it.

In Brief:

- Though a representation on the need for fair postings was submitted recently, action was not forthcoming. Presently, postings are largely decided by the Chief Secretary in consultation with the Chief Minister, and sometimes, in consultation with the Ministers concerned.
- Some honest officers were not in the State's good books. Hence, many officers, including

CIVIL SERVICES BOARD	
HEAD Chief secretary	For IPS: Members of IAS board plus (c) principal secretary or home secretary; (d) director-general of police.
MEMBERS For IAS: (a) Senior-most additional chief secretary, or board of revenue chairman, or financial commissioner, or an officer of equivalent rank; (b) Principal secretary, or secretary to the state department of personnel.	For IFoS: Members of IAS board plus (c) principal secretary or forest secretary; (d) principal chief conservator of forests.

Note



those newly-inducted, who were mostly selected through the Union Public Service Commission directly (referred to as Regular Recruits or RR), were overlooked for key posts.

- Most District Collectors are in sync with the Ministers hailing from those districts, which is not necessarily healthy, and hence, they continue to be Collectors for a long time. Even an officer [whose premises was] raided by the I-T Department is still holding her post. In some cases, even key posts are filled with non-IAS officers.

Field postings

- As for training, contrary to the usual practice of giving field postings to young officers to help them gain knowledge of how schemes work at the grass-roots level, new RRs are rarely given field postings.
- If there is a State Civil Services Board, as directed by the Supreme Court in T.S.R. Subramanian and others vs Union of India, it will ensure fair postings for all officers.
- Other than revenue postings like the RDO, there are development-related postings in the DRDA and others, which are not being filled with IAS officers. Also, the practice of posting an IAS officer to manage an ailing cooperative sugar mill and boost its performance is quite rare these days.

NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY

In news:

- The National Investigation Agency may send its team to Colombo to assist the Srilankan police in connection with the series of blasts in churches and hotels across Sri Lanka

About NIA:

- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was created by an Act of the Parliament of India i.e NIA Act, 2008, following the traumatic Mumbai Terror Attack on 26th November, 2008, for investigation and prosecution of offences affecting sovereignty, security and integrity of India. NIA plays the role of the national counter terrorism law enforcement agency.
- The agency is empowered to deal with terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states.
- It aims to be a thoroughly professional investigative agency matching the best international standards.
- NIA has a conviction percentage of 91.3%.
- As of now NIA has 8 Branch offices across the country - Hyderabad, Guwahati, Kochi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, Jammu.
- It works in partnership with Central, State and non-governmental security and intelligence establishments.



Note

In News: India May stop its oil imports from Iran and U.S.A is firm with India on Iranian oil curbs

In Brief:

- The country plans to increase imports from major oil producing nations other than Iran, indicating that it will be acceding to the U.S. plan to reduce Iran's oil exports to zero.
- The U.S. had announced earlier that it would be cancelling the waivers from sanctions it had granted eight countries, including India, allowing them to import oil from Iran.
- Following the revocation of this waiver, any country violating the ban would face U.S. sanctions.



- The government has put in place a robust plan for adequate supply of crude oil to Indian refineries, according to the ministry.

Questions from the opposition:

- The Opposition, has criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not speaking up about the U.S. sanctions, questioning how another country can dictate where and how India secures its energy requirements.
- It was termed as a Surgical strike on India, by USA according to the opposition.

US Sets deadline for escrow account use

- The Trump administration made it clear that it would make no concessions on its demand that India “zero out” oil imports from Iran.
- India’s “escrow account” used for Rupee-Rial trade cannot be operated after its May 2 deadline. However, **there is no change in the exemption given for India’s investments in Chabahar port as a trade route to Afghanistan.**
- The ‘secondary sanctions’ will see the U.S. placing strict financial curbs on any entities or companies violating the oil sanctions, including a ban on the use of the SWIFT banking international transaction system by the companies, seizure of any U.S. assets of those companies, and curtailing any other dollar transactions. Eventually, the cost of importing Iranian oil would be much higher than other sources of oil that it would be unviable.
- It was a purely commercial decision, taken by the oil importers, including the PSU.

About Escrow Account:

- It is a legal concept, describing a financial instrument.
- Escrow is the use of a third party, which holds an asset or funds before they are transferred from one party to another.
- The third party holds the funds until both parties have fulfilled their contractual requirements.
- Escrow is associated with real estate transactions, but it can apply to any situation where funds will pass from one party to another.
- Money, securities, funds, and other assets can all be held in escrow.

Note

