

Seaweed: A Nutritional Powerhouse from the Ocean

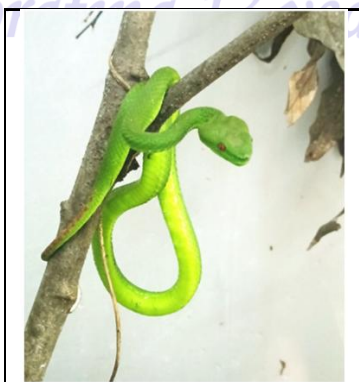
- Seaweed is a type of **marine plant** that grows in oceans and seas.
- It is **used in many products like food, cosmetics, fertilizers and even in medicine.**
- It **grows in shallow waters and doesn't require land or freshwater**, making it an eco-friendly crop.
- It's becoming popular worldwide as a **healthy food** because it's easy to grow and needs little care.
- Seaweed is rich in vitamins, minerals, and amino acids.** It helps fight diseases like cancer, diabetes, arthritis, heart problems and high blood pressure.
- It also **boosts immunity and keeps body healthy.**
- Key products made from seaweed:**
 - Alginate:** Extracted from **brown seaweeds** (harvested from the wild). It's **used as a thickener in foods, cosmetics, and even medical products.**
 - Agar:** Comes from **red seaweeds.** It's been cultivated since the 1960s and is **used in desserts, jams, and laboratory cultures.**
 - Carrageenan:** Extracted from **certain red seaweeds like Irish Moss.** It's **used in dairy products, ice creams, and toothpaste.**
- Seaweed is **one of the eight types of biostimulants**, which help increase crop yields, improve soil health and make plants stronger.

A biostimulant is a natural substance or microorganism that helps plants grow stronger. It improves the plant's ability to absorb nutrients and makes them more resistant to stress, like drought or diseases. Unlike fertilizers or pesticides, biostimulants don't provide nutrients directly but enhance the plant's natural processes for better growth and health.

- Seaweed farming is **eco-friendly** as it helps fight climate change by absorbing CO₂ from air.
- Seaweed also **improves ocean health by cleaning water and providing homes for marine life.**

Pope's Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus popeiorum*):

- A new study has uncoded the mysteries of how venom of Pope's pit viper works.
- It is an **arboreal, nocturnal snake indigenous to dense forests of Northeast India & Southeast Asia.**
- Greenish in colour**, it may grow to a total length of 770 mm.
- If threatened, it will vibrate its tail.**
- It possesses a potent **hemotoxic venom** which is dangerous to humans.



Kodungalloor Bharani Festival:

- Annual festival at Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple in Kodungalloor, Thrissur district**, known as Kodungalloor Bharani, is **one of Kerala's most famous and intense celebrations.**
- Takes place **during Malayalam month of Meenam (March-April).**

- Apanning over a month, **festivities commence with 'Kozhikkallu moodal,'** a ritual involving the sacrifice of cocks and the shedding of their blood, an essential aspect of the temple's traditions.
- Temple's rituals are thought to have **roots in the ancient connections between Kodungalloor and Thondi, a region once under Chera rule** that served as their second capital.
- Highlight of Bharani festival is the Aswathy Kavutheendal,** held on the day before the Bharani asterism. On this day, **temple grounds transform into a sea of red as oracles (velichappad) dressed in red robes and wielding ceremonial swords,** enter a trance and perform ritual dances to honor the deity.
- These oracles, both men and women,** proclaim their communion with Mother Goddess by striking their heads with swords, creating a mystical and riveting atmosphere.
- Dedicated to Goddess Bhadrakali, Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple is one of Kerala's oldest temples.**
- The **idol of Bhadrakali, carved from the wood of a jackfruit tree,** features eight hands, one of which holds the severed head of the demon Daruka.
- Another legend suggests **temple was built by the ruler Cheran Chenguttavan in honor of Kannaki, heroine of Tamil epic Silappadikaram.**

Impact of U.S. tariffs on India's seafood exports:

- Impact on Indian sea food exports to the U.S. will be significant considering that **India is largest exporter of seafood to the U.S., having a 35% share in U.S. market.**
- Bulk of India's seafood exports is frozen shrimp and biggest importer is U.S.**

Heard and McDonald Islands:

- Donald Trump has imposed a 10% tariff on imports from Heard and McDonald Islands.
- Volcanic islands are one of seven external territories belonging to Australia,** located roughly 4,100 km to south-west of Perth, and 1,600 km to north of Antarctic coast.
- Covered in glaciers, and barren for most part,** archipelago is among the most remote places on planet, **home to only penguins, seals, and seabirds.**
- Other Australian islands Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Christmas Island, and Norfolk Island.**

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 (Senior Citizens Act):

- It allows parents (age 60 and above) who are unable to maintain themselves "from his own earning or property owned by him" to file a suit for maintenance against their children or relatives (legal heirs).
- It places an obligation on these children or relatives to meet the parents' needs "so that such parent may lead a normal life".
- The **Act also establishes dedicated tribunals to hear these suits, along with appellate tribunals** to hear challenges to any orders passed.
- Crucially, **Section 23 of the Act** also gives parents an avenue to receive maintenance even after transferring or gifting their property.
- Under Section 23(1),** a senior citizen may gift or transfer her property with a condition that the receiver "shall provide the basic amenities and basic physical needs".

- If this condition is not met, the provision states that the transfer “shall be deemed to have been made by fraud or coercion or under undue influence” and can be declared void if the senior citizen approaches the tribunal.

Tipitaka/Tripitaka:

- PM thanks Thailand PM for giving a copy of Tipitaka in Pali.
- Teachings of Buddha were compiled into texts known as the **Tripitaka or the Three Baskets, which form the foundation of Buddhist scriptures.**

- Tipitaka forms the core of the Theravada texts, encompassing the Vinaya Pitaka (rules for monks), Sutta Pitaka (teachings of the Buddha), and Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical analyses).
- In Mahayana Buddhism, important texts include the Prajnaparamita Sutras and the Lotus Sutra, which explore profound philosophical ideas and emphasise the path to enlightenment for all beings.

PRACTICE MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Tipitaka forms the core of the Mahayana Buddhism.
2. Prajnaparamita Sutras and the Lotus Sutra are important texts of Theravada Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: D

Q2. Consider the following statements about Kodungalloor Bharani festival:

1. It is an annual festival at Sree Kurumba Bhagavathy Temple in Karnataka.
2. The temple is dedicated to Goddess Bhadrakali.
3. The festival takes place during Malayalam month of Meenam.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Q3. Consider the following products:

1. Alginate
2. Agar
3. Carrageenan

How many of the products mentioned above are produced from seaweed?

- a) Only one
- b) Only two
- c) All three
- d) None

Answer: C

Q4. Consider the following statements about Pope's pit viper:

1. It is an arboreal, nocturnal snake indigenous to dense forests of Western Ghats.
2. If threatened, it will vibrate its tail.
3. It possesses potent hemotoxic venom which is dangerous to humans.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: B

Q5. Consider the following statements about the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007:

1. It allows parents of age 60 and above, who are unable to maintain themselves from his own earning or property owned by him, to file a suit for maintenance against their legal heir.
2. A senior citizen may gift or transfer her property with a condition that the receiver shall provide the basic amenities and basic physical needs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C