

Blue-Cheeked Bee-eater

Why in News?

The first breeding site of the Blue-Cheeked Bee-eater in peninsular India has been discovered in the saltpans of Aandivilai near the Manakudy Mangroves in Kanniyakumari district.

- **Scientific Name** - Merops persicus.
- It is a near ***passerine bird*** in the bee-eater family, Meropidae.
- It is a passage ***migrant and winter visitor in India***.
- **Appearance** - It is a richly colored, slender bird.
- It is predominantly green, its face has blue sides with a black eye stripe, and a yellow and brown throat, the beak is black.



- **Habitat** - Found in open areas as well as forests from lowlands up into middle elevations.
- **Distribution** - It breeds across Northern Africa and the Middle East, from eastern Turkey to Kazakhstan and India.
- Occasionally, this bird appears as a rare vagrant north of its usual range, particularly in Italy and Greece.
- **Behaviour** - It may choose to nest solitarily or in small, loose colonies of up to ten individuals. It is also known to share colonies with European bee-eaters.
- **Breeding Regions** - Nesting sites are often located in sandy banks, embankments, or low cliffs, and occasionally on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- Its breeding was primarily recorded in regions such as Nile Delta, Pakistan, and Iran while its wintering grounds include parts of Africa.
- **Diet** - Feed on insects preferably dragonflies.

- **Threats** - Habitat destruction, from developmental activities, and anthropogenic pressures.
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN** - Least Concern.

Reference

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