Kumbakonam Vetrilai

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in News?

The Kumbakonam vetrilai, or betel leaf, has recently been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

- **Announced in** - April 2025.
- It is a heart-shaped leaf, key to making paan, which is an important cultural and agricultural symbol.
- **Growing areas** - It is predominantly grown in Thanjavur's fertile Cauvery River basin, Tamil Nadu giving it a unique taste and aroma.
- **Colour** - Dark to light green.
- **Harvest process -** After 20–25 days of planting, *kolundhu vetrilai*, the first leaves emerge.
- The first-year harvest happens from the seventh to 12th month.
- It is called maaruvethalai, produces larger leaves with a better shelf life of six to seven days, and fetches higher prices in the market.
- Second and third-year yields – *kelavethalai* and *kattavethalai* – are smaller compared to the first year's yield.
- **Health Benefits** - It aids digestion and is rich in antioxidants. They are high in chavicol, an anti-inflammatory compound that fights oxidative stress, common in conditions like diabetes
- This is Thanjavur's first agricultural GI tag.

Reference

The Indian Express | Kumbakonam vetrilai