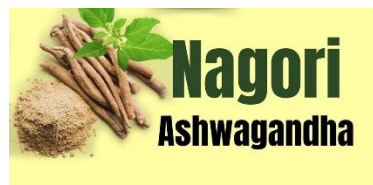


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WHAT IS NAGORI ASHWAGANDHA?



- It is a **premium variety** of Ashwagandha, sourced from the Nagaur region in Rajasthan.
- Nagaur's dry climate and sandy soil are ideally suited for Ashwagandha cultivation.

- It has **longer, thicker roots rich in medicinal compounds**, particularly **alkaloids**.
- Its **berries** are known for their **dark, bright red colour**, which is considered a clear indicator of superior quality. It has brittle and starchy roots.
- It received the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag** in 2026.

Key Facts about Ashwagandha:

- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is an important **medicinal plant** cultivated in regions of **South Asia, Africa, and Central Asia**.
- **Other names:** Indian ginseng or Indian winter cherry
- It is a **small perennial shrub** growing up to 35–75 cm in height.
- It has been in use as a medicinal plant for thousands of years, especially in **traditional Ayurvedic medicine**.
- It was **first mentioned** by the learned **Punarvasu Atreya**.
- Medicinal properties of this plant are **mentioned in Ayurvedic treatises like Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Astanga Hridaya, Bhava Prakasha Nighantu, etc.**
- **Benefits:**
 - It is often called an **adaptogen**, meaning it **helps the body adapt to stressors** and restore balance.
 - Its other benefits are **reducing inflammation, increasing energy, alleviating anxiety, ease pain, and improving sleep**.
 - **Different parts** of the ashwagandha plant, such as the root, leaves, and berries, may have **different concentrations of bioactive compounds**.

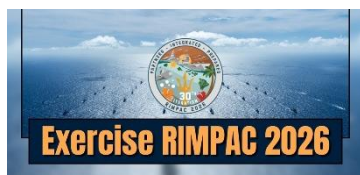
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- **Required Climatic Condition:**
 - It grows in **dry and subtropical regions**.
 - **Soil:** It grows well in **sandy loam or light red soil** having pH 7.5 to 8.0 with good drainage.
 - **Climate:** It is grown as a **late rainy season (kharif) crop**.
 - **Rain:** The **semi-tropical areas** receiving **500 to 750 mm rainfall** are suitable for its cultivation as a rainfed crop.
 - **Temperature:** It can tolerate a temperature range of **20 to 38 degree Celsius**.
 - **Major Ashwagandha-Producing States in India:** **Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra.**

EXERCISE RIMPAC 2026



- **Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)** is the world's largest international maritime exercise.
 - Hosted by the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet, it is held biennially (every two years) in and around the **Hawaiian Islands** in the Pacific Ocean.
- It **first began in 1971**.
- It provides a unique training opportunity for allies and partners to strengthen their collective capabilities and **promote a free and open Indo-Pacific**.
- **2026 Edition:**
 - It is the **30th edition** of the exercise. The **Indian Navy** is also participating in the exercise.
 - The **theme** of RIMPAC 2026 is **"Partners: Integrated and Prepared."**
 - It will reinforce collective security through a range of exercises in **anti-submarine warfare, air defence, missile proficiency, mine clearance, amphibious assaults, disaster response, and gunnery training**.

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KISAN SARATHI PLATFORM



- It is India's largest **integrated digital agro-advisory platform** launched in 2021.
- It provides timely, authentic, and **multilingual advisories to farmers**. Farmers also get access to schemes, weather updates, and expert consultations.
- It is a joint initiative of the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** and the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- The **Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute** and the **Digital India Corporation** implement the platform.
- It **connects farmers with**: Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), ICAR institutes and agricultural universities.

Features of Kisan Sarathi Platform:

- It provides personalized advisory based on farm and farmer profile.
- It offers live interaction in **13 regional languages with domain experts**.
- It provides access to the farmer's knowledge database.
- It connects farmers **directly with agricultural experts**.
- Farmers can get **region-specific, real-time advisories** on weather updates, market prices, and more.
- It helps **farmers discover government schemes** suitable to their specific needs.
- It provides advisories for all **major cereals, pulses, oilseeds, horticulture crops**, plantation crops, and fodder crops and also for the livestock, poultry, fisheries, and allied sectors.
- Farmers can **easily access the mandi prices** and district-wise market rates for major crops. They can also view the market trends for selected crops.

RURAL INTERNAL AUDIT PORTAL



- It is a **unified digital platform** for end-to-end management of internal audits covering both risk-based and compliance audits.
- It is conceived by the **Office of the Chief Controller of Accounts (CCA)**, Ministry of Rural Development, and developed in collaboration with the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.

Objectives of the Portal:

- **Digitize and simplify the entire internal audit process** to improve efficiency, transparency and accountability.
- **Create a centralized repository of audit units**, audit observations, Action Taken Reports and audit records.
- **Enable risk-based audit planning** through systematic identification and prioritization of audit units.
- **Automate the generation of audit reports** and standardize audit documentation.
- **Facilitate real-time monitoring of audit progress**, compliance status and approval workflows. Evaluate outputs and outcomes of internal audit interventions.

Tech architecture:

- It uses **Git-based version control systems** and **Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD)** workflows.
- It also includes **role-based access control**, centralized monitoring systems, **secure API-based integrations**, automated exception handling.
- **Disaster recovery protocols** have also been incorporated.

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HOW SCHOOLS CAN TACKLE ADOLESCENT MALNUTRITION?

- India is facing a **double burden of malnutrition**, where persistent undernutrition coexists with rising obesity and lifestyle diseases.
- Increasing cases of **diabetes**, **hypertension**, and **cardiovascular diseases** among young people indicate that these conditions originate much earlier than adulthood.
- **Adolescence** is a crucial stage for developing lifelong dietary and lifestyle habits, making **schools** the ideal institutions for preventive action.
- By promoting **nutrition literacy**, healthy eating, and physical activity, schools can play a transformative role in improving public health.

Promoting Balanced Nutrition in Schools

- Many adolescents consume diets dominated by cereals while lacking sufficient **proteins**, **fruits**, **vegetables**, and dairy products.
- Such dietary patterns contribute to poor growth, micronutrient deficiencies, and long-term metabolic disorders.
- Schools should strengthen **midday meals**, introduce healthier canteens, establish **school gardens**, and encourage the use of seasonal local produce.

Addressing Sugar, HFSS Foods, and Ultra-Processed Foods

- The growing popularity of High Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS) foods and Ultra-Processed Foods (UPFs) has significantly worsened adolescent nutrition.
- Frequent consumption of sugary drinks and processed snacks increases the risk of obesity and chronic diseases.
- Schools should discourage unhealthy food choices by creating **UPF-free school zones**, displaying information on hidden sugar content, and promoting healthier alternatives.
- Continuous awareness programmes are more effective than one-time campaigns in shaping lasting behavioural change.

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Promoting Physical Activity

- Poor nutrition is closely linked with **physical inactivity** and increasing screen time.
- Reduced participation in sports has contributed to rising obesity across both urban and rural areas.
- Schools should make regular exercise, sports, and outdoor activities compulsory rather than optional.
- Daily physical activity improves physical fitness, reduces the risk of non-communicable diseases, and supports better mental and emotional well-being.
- Healthy diets and active lifestyles must complement each other to produce lasting health benefits.

Policy Support and Public Health Initiatives

- Strong institutional support is essential for sustainable change.
- The Let's Fix Our Food (LFOF) initiative led by ICMR-NIN promotes healthier food environments through evidence-based policies, nutrition education, food-label reading, regulation of unhealthy food advertising, and taxation of sugary beverages.
- Such initiatives empower students to make informed dietary choices while encouraging schools to adopt comprehensive nutrition programmes that extend beyond classroom instruction.

Conclusion

- The growing burden of adolescent malnutrition threatens India's future health and economic productivity.
- Preventing obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases requires interventions long before adulthood.
- Schools should evolve into **public health-promoting institutions** by integrating balanced nutrition, food literacy, healthy food environments, and compulsory physical activity into everyday education.

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INDIA-SEYCHELLES RELATIONS - STRENGTHENING THE MAHASAGAR VISION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

- During the Indian PM's State Visit to Seychelles (27–29 June 2026), India and Seychelles **elevated** their **strategic partnership** by signing multiple agreements.
- The visit also marked **50 years** of diplomatic relations between the two countries and reinforced India's **MAHASAGAR** (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

India's Vision for the Indian Ocean:

- The Indian PM reiterated India's vision of transforming the Indian Ocean into an "**Ocean of Opportunity**", founded on:
 - Maritime security and regional stability
 - Sustainable economic prosperity
 - Partnership based on mutual respect and trust rather than size or power
 - Shared responsibility for security, sustainability and development
- India emphasized that the Indian Ocean is a **shared strategic space**, requiring collaborative action against both traditional and non-traditional security threats.

Major Outcomes of the Visit:

- **Expansion of strategic partnership:**
 - The leaders agreed to deepen cooperation across several sectors:
 - Health and healthcare
 - Education and skill development
 - Capacity building
 - Digital transformation
 - Renewable energy
 - Sustainable development
 - Social infrastructure
 - Maritime security and defence

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- **Key agreements (MoUs) signed:**

- Several agreements were concluded in the fields of:
 - Unified Payments Interface (UPI) implementation
 - Healthcare
 - Agriculture
 - Banking and Exim Bank cooperation
 - Shipping
 - Space exploration
 - Capacity building
 - Extradition
 - Line of Credit (LoC)
- These agreements aim to **modernise Seychelles' economy** while enhancing India's developmental partnership in the region.

MAHASAGAR Vision:

- Seychelles reaffirmed its special place in India's MAHASAGAR vision.
- The initiative seeks to promote collective maritime security, **blue economy**, disaster resilience, sustainable development, regional connectivity, and inclusive economic growth.
- It represents an **evolution** of India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) doctrine towards broader regional cooperation.

Why Seychelles matters for India?

- **Strategic location** in the Western Indian Ocean along key Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).
- Critical partner in India's maritime security architecture.
- Supports India's Blue Economy and Indo-Pacific strategy.
- Important for **monitoring maritime threats** (seaborne terrorism and piracy), ensuring regional stability and countering China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean.

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SARISKA TIGER RESERVE



- It is located in the Alwar district, Rajasthan.
- It is a part of the Aravali Range and the Kathiawar-Gir dry deciduous forests ecoregion.
- It was once a hunting ground of the Maharaja of Alwar before being proclaimed a natural reserve in 1955 and a national park in 1979.
- It became a Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger in 1979.
- It lost all its tigers to poaching in 2005.
- However, it holds the distinction of being one of the world's earliest successful tiger reintroduction efforts.
- It is also famous for old temples, palaces, and lakes such as Pandu Pol, Bhangarh Fort, Ajabgarh, Pratapgarh, Siliserh Lake, and Jai Samand Lake.
- **Topography:** It possesses a rocky landscape, scrub thorn arid forests, grasses, hilly cliffs, and semi-deciduous wood.
- **Vegetation:** The vegetation corresponds to Northern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests and Northern Tropical Thorn Forest.
- **Flora:**
 - The area of this reserve is covered with Dhok trees.
 - Other species found include Salar, Kadasa, Gol, Ber, Banyan, Gugal, Bamboo, Kair, Adusta, etc.
- **Fauna:**
 - A variety of wild animals, like the Leopard, Sambhar, Chital, Nilgai, four-horned Antelope, wild boar etc are found in the reserve apart from the Tiger.
 - Peafowl, Grey Partridge, Sand Grouse and Crested Serpent Eagle are some of the birds found near the river bodies and the protected areas of the park.
 - The largest population of peafowl in India resides in Sariska National Park.