Blue Flag for three more Tamil Nadu beaches; Kovalam's sixth

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News

The Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) has awarded the international Blue Flag for 2026-27 to three Tamil Nadu beaches for the first time: Silver Beach (Cuddalore), Kameswaram Beach (Nagapattinam) and Ariyaman Beach (Ramanathapuram). Kovalam Beach (Chengalpattu) retained it for the 6th time. Tamil Nadu now has 4 Blue Flag beaches. (reported 12 Nov 2026). For comparison: in October 2025 five Maharashtra beaches, including Shrivardhan (Raigad), won the Blue Flag for the first time.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Awarding body	FEE, Copenhagen, Denmark (programme began in 1985 in France)
Criteria	33 standards: water quality, environmental management, safety, environmental education, visitor facilities
Validity	One season; renewed every year after national and international juries inspect
Tamil Nadu's first	Kovalam, certified in 2021 (with Eden Beach, Puducherry)
State programme	Tamil Nadu Neithal Meetchi Iyakkam (TN-SHORE), Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests

Background

- India's route to the Blue Flag is the BEAMS programme (Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services) of the Union Environment Ministry, run under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) project. India's first eight Blue Flag beaches were certified in 2020.
- Shrivardhan lies on the Konkan coast of Raigad district. In October 2025 five Maharashtra beaches (Shrivardhan, Nagaon, Parnaka, Guhagar, Ladghar) won the Blue Flag for the first time.
- Why it matters: the tag tells tourists that the beach meets global standards on clean water, waste handling, lifeguards and access, and pushes local bodies to keep those standards every year. Kovalam drew about 5.5 lakh visitors in 2025-26.

Tamil Nadu link: "Neithal" is the Sangam landscape of the sea and seashore (deity Varunan); the five tinais are Kurinji (hills), Mullai (forest), Marutham (cropland), Neithal (coast) and Palai (arid land). Tamil Nadu has India's second-longest coastline (about 1,076 km).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

The Denmark-based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) has awarded the international Blue Flag for 2026-27 to three Tamil Nadu beaches for the first time: Silver Beach (Cuddalore), Kameswaram Beach (Nagapattinam) and Ariyaman Beach (Ramanathapuram).

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Awarding body: FEE, Copenhagen, Denmark (programme began in 1985 in France); Criteria: 33 standards: water quality, environmental management, safety, environmental education, visitor facilities; Validity: One season; renewed every year after national and international juries inspect; Tamil Nadu's first: Kovalam, certified in 2021 (with Eden Beach, Puducherry).

What is the background to this news?

India's route to the Blue Flag is the BEAMS programme (Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services) of the Union Environment Ministry, run under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) project.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which organisation awards the international "Blue Flag" certification to beaches?

A) UNEP

B) IUCN

C) FEE, Denmark

D) WWF

Answer: C – Explanation: The Denmark-based FEE awards it every year against 33 criteria; it must be renewed annually.

2. Which Tamil Nadu beach received the Blue Flag for the 6th time, for 2026-27?

A) Marina Beach

B) Kovalam Beach

C) Silver Beach

D) Ariyaman Beach

Answer: B – Explanation: Kovalam (Chengalpattu district) became Tamil Nadu's first Blue Flag beach in 2021; this is its 6th time. The other three won it for the first time in 2026-27.

3. Which beach – district pair (first-time Blue Flag, 2026-27) is correctly matched?

A) Kameswaram – Ramanathapuram

B) Ariyaman – Thoothukudi

C) Kovalam – Viluppuram

D) Silver Beach – Cuddalore

Answer: D – Explanation: Correct pairs: Silver – Cuddalore, Kameswaram – Nagapattinam, Ariyaman – Ramanathapuram, Kovalam – Chengalpattu. Tamil Nadu now has 4 Blue Flag beaches.

4. "Neithal" in TN's "Neithal Meetchi Iyakkam" denotes which Sangam landscape?

A) Seashore

B) Hills

C) Forest

D) Cropland

Answer: A – Explanation: The five tinais: Kurinji (hills), Mullai (forest), Marutham (cropland), Neithal (seashore), Palai (arid land). Varunan is the deity of Neithal.

5. Shrivardhan beach, a Blue Flag beach, is in which district of Maharashtra?

A) Ratnagiri

B) Raigad

C) Sindhudurg

D) Palghar

Answer: B – Explanation: Shrivardhan lies on the Konkan coast in Raigad district. In October 2025 five Maharashtra beaches (Shrivardhan, Nagaon, Parnaka, Guhagar, Ladghar) won the Blue Flag for the first time.

Sources: Daily Thanthi (12 Nov 2026); TN Dept of Environment, Climate Change & Forests (environment.tn.gov.in/doe/blueflag); AIR News (12 Oct 2025). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.