

Media Release

Medicinal cannabis – Asia & Middle East

Many nations ... but only now at the starting line

We've combined the two regions – Middle East & Asia into one report – why?

While these two regions lag behind the rest of the world, however momentum is building to normalise cannabis consumption. Out of a total of 48 countries identified by BiorTica, only 2 – Georgia and Thailand - have so far legalised cannabis for both medicinal and personal use.

A further 8 countries have legalised medicinal cannabis only, although Israel has decriminalised its personal use. Interestingly, Israel has the highest per capita cannabis consumption globally.

Legal status for all 10 countries is detailed in the table below.

A couple of interesting observations have come to light. In Sri Lanka, medicinal use is permitted, but is restricted to cannabis' use in *Ayurvedic* medicine. An ancient herbal based healing discipline – over 3,000 years old – developed in India, ayurvedic preparations have been bench-marked against modern conventional chemical pharmaceuticals. In documented clinical trials, natural herbal ayurvedic medicines are said to exhibit equivalent efficacy.

The word Ayurvedic is derived from the Sanskrit words ayur(life) and veda (science, knowledge). The Ayurveda Act of 2023 made it legal to also cultivate cannabis for this use.

In India personal use of cannabis hasn't yet been legalised, but consumption of *Bhang*, is allowed. Usually consumed during the Hindu religious holiday of *Holi*, the bhang beverage is prepared from fresh cannabis leaf, nuts, seeds and spices and usually sold in government operated stores. There are many recipes for bhang, but toasting the leaf to increase its effect, may go part of the way to explaining its popularity. We suspect the real reason is that some of the trichomes from the flower somehow find their way into the beverage, but who knows for sure!



Image: Bhang made from cannabis is consumed in India during the Hindu religious holiday of *Holi*.

As for the rest of the Middle East and Asia, cannabis is yet to be legalised. From Singapore to the UAE, from Malaysia to Indonesia, illegal for either medicinal or personal use.

“We look forward to continuing to share our industry leading research with the Australian industry, our legislators and regulators,” said Tom Varga, CEO of Biortica Agrimed.

“Legal, regulated and safe will always beat illegal, unregulated and potentially unsafe,” he said.

ASIA & MIDDLE EAST CURRENT STATE OF CANNABIS LEGISLATION

| COUNTRY | USE | |
|---------|-----------|----------|
| | MEDICINAL | PERSONAL |
| Cyprus | ✓ | ✗ |
| Georgia | ✓ | ✓ |
| India | ✓ | ✗ |
| Israel | ✓ | D |
| Lebanon | ✓ | ✗ |

| COUNTRY | USE | |
|-------------|-----------|----------|
| | MEDICINAL | PERSONAL |
| Pakistan | ✓ | ✗ |
| South Korea | ✓ | ✗ |
| Sri Lanka | ✓ | ✗ |
| Thailand | ✓ | ✓ |
| Turkey | ✓ | ✗ |

✓ - Legal

✗ - Illegal

D - Decriminalised

DISCLAIMER:

Biortica Agrimed makes every reasonable effort to ensure accuracy of information supplied. Biortica does not warrant the accuracy of this information as regulations are changing and evolving. The above tabulation is the result of desk-top research. Where possible the information has been sourced from government and/or industry leading websites. The information should not be relied upon for investment purposes.

Biortica Agrimed Ltd

Award winning, Biortica Agrimed Ltd is Australia's largest fully vertically integrated commercial grower of medicinal plants. Our B2B operations are seamlessly integrated from plant genetics through to supply of medicinal plants in commercial quantities. We employ glasshouse-based horticulture, to both, protect our valuable medicinal crops, and equally to minimise our environmental impact, thereby protecting the planet. Our goal is to significantly improve human health outcomes by supplying high quality agricultural medicinal plants, at scale, to uniform high quality standards year-round.

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