

Presenting



Tamil Nadu

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Innovation, creativity mark awareness mela

Staff Reporter

Need to protect the ocean underlined

Display of junk art at Loyola College

CHENNAI: There were turtles all over. Papier-mâché turtles with felt-tipped eyes, turtles with coconut shells for backs and big cardboard turtles with markings on their shells. They jostled for space with necklaces made of shells, a recycling plant made of a used can and a water snake made out of an old sari at the display of junk art, one of the competitions held at Loyola College on Saturday.

The competition was one of the series of events being conducted as part of an awareness mela —'Flipper Fest 07' — on the conservation of marine biodiversity.

The mela is a prelude to the International Coastal Cleanup Day which falls on September 16.

It is being organised by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), the National Biodiversity Authority, the National Institute of Ocean Technology, the Indian Coast Guard, the Tree Foundation and Loyola College. The programme is aimed at increasing awareness about the fragile marine ecosystem and means to conserve it.

"You are the custodians for the conservation and protection of biodiversity in this country," S. Kannaiyan, director, National Biodiversity Authority of India said, appealing to students respect nature and avoid exploiting marine resources.

Inspector General Raajendra Singh of Indian Coast Guard

detailed the measures undertaken by the Coast Guard to protect the nation's coastline. He said it regularly undertook programmes in coastal villages to teach fishermen about marine ecology.

Loyola College Rector K. Amal underlined the need to protect the ocean. "One-third of the world's population depends directly on the sea for their livelihood," he said. The mela also had documentaries on dolphins, turtles and coral reefs, a street play by college students, an auction of photographs and paintings as well as various competitions for schools and colleges across the city.

Innovation and creativity marked most creations as students competed to create models, ornaments and jewellery with biodegradable material.

Supraja Dharini, chairperson, Tree Foundation participated.

Around 23 schools and 20 colleges took part in the mela.

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