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International Coastal Clean-up Day: 2.54 lakh kg trash removed from Mumbai's beaches

Marking the occasion of International Coastal Cleanup day, 3,000 people cleared 2.40 lakh kg of trash from Versova beach after they completed their 100th week of their clean-up

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Hindustan Times



Volunteers at Versova beach on Saturday.(Pramod Thakur/HT PHOTO)

A total of 2.54 lakh kg of trash was removed from various shorelines by different citizen groups and the coast guard.

Marking the occasion of International Coastal Cleanup day, 3,000 people cleared 2.40 lakh kg of trash from Versova beach after they completed their 100th week of their clean-up. "This was one of the largest beach cleanup drives the country has ever seen," said Afroz Shah, lawyer and beach cleanup crusader who has been leading the movement at Versova since October 2015.

The International Coastal Cleanup day is conducted in various parts of the world on the third Saturday of September every year under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and under the aegis of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in the South Asian Region.

With seven excavator machines and two tractors, Mumbaiites along with representatives of the UNEP ensured that the north central part of the 3km long beach (Darachiwadi) was cleaned up between 3pm and 5pm. "We thank citizens to help us achieve the quantum of 7.4 million kg trash removed from Versova over 100 weeks," said Shah.

As a part of the Centre's Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, the Indian Coast Guard carried out beach cleanup drives at several locations across Maharashtra including Juhu, Girgaum Chowpatty, Dadar, Khanoji Island, Dahanu, Ratnagiri and Murud Janjira beaches. Around 7000 volunteers including NGOs, NCC cadets, NSS, school and college students, staff of various organisations and local community joined hands with the coast guard officers.

"Approximate 5000 kgs of garbage including medical, plastic, jute and Plaster of Paris waste was collected and handed over to BMC for disposal," said an official from the Indian Coast Guard adding that their nationwide campaign resulted in the collection of 68.9 tons (62,505kg) of marine litter. "Debris collection was highest from Mumbai at 8,500 kg and New Mangalore at 6,300 kg."

Residents of Mahim also cleared 700 kg of garbage from their beach. "We had close to 20 people that cleared trash from a 100-patch on the beach. Close to 200 people will be joining another cleanup drive on Sunday," said Anwar Khan, chairman, advance locality management, Mahim Dargah Street.

Civic body officials said the city had come together for one cause and it was a remarkable feat. "The amount of marine litter collected and sent to the city dumping grounds on Saturday was much more than any cleanup witnessed in the past. We welcome the efforts by citizens to strive for clean seas," said a senior civic official.

Why should you care?

Each year, people around the world produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic and a similar amount of plastic waste. Of that, as much as 13 million tons finds its way into our oceans. The plastic wreaks havoc on our fisheries, marine ecosystems and economies, costing up to \$13 billion per year in

environmental damage.

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