Plastic waste constitutes more than 60% of the litter found in the beaches of Bangladesh, as a part of the South Asian Seas (SAS) region, currently faces the worst-case scenario of sea pollution due to plastic – one of the worst pollutants that are harming the seas globally. Plastic is one of the worst pollutants that are causing harm to the seas and oceans across the world.

According to the report, marine litter reaches the ocean from the land through river runoff, drainage system, wind action and intentional or unintentional discharge of materials in the sea due to human activities. A total of 6,705 pieces of waste products were found on a 18.5km stretch of the four sea beaches. Among the litter, 63% were found to be plastic, 13% foamed plastic, 2% cloth, 1% glass and 1% metal. Plastic bags were found to be the most common type of litter: at least 2,182 pieces of plastic foam, 470 pieces of cigarette butts and filters, and 300 bottles.

Plastic lasts up to a 1,000 years, and accounts for nearly 90% of the debris in the oceans around the world. Plastic is one of the most dangerous pollutants for seas and oceans. It is directly ingested by fish every year. Also, plastic litter breaks into small pieces called microplastic, which affects many species, including seabirds, marine mammals and fish through entanglement and ingestion, and humans.

Globally, plastic is one of the most dangerous pollutants for seas and oceans. It is directly ingested by fish every year. Also, plastic litter breaks into small pieces called microplastic, which affects many species, including seabirds, marine mammals and fish through entanglement and ingestion, and humans.

The National 3R Strategy for Waste Management was launched in Bangladesh in 2010. The city corporations and municipalities are making efforts to incorporate the concepts and guidance of the 3R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – policy has achieved much attention of many countries in tackling the issue, according to the report. Two other R's – Refuse and Redesign – were also added recently to the policy.

The report, titled “National Status including Database, Proposed Recycling Enterprise and Preparation of Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the SAS region.” The Department of Environment under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change prepared the report, is the first of its kind in Bangladesh, with technical support from the South Asia Environment Programme (Unep).

It also recommended raising awareness about littering through academic activities and information campaigns to convey the effect of littering – near the marine areas as well as in the land area. It also recommended raising awareness about littering through academic activities and information campaigns to convey the effect of littering – near the marine areas as well as in the land area.

The report made a number of recommendations to bring down and control the reckless dumping of plastic waste. Similar strategies should be initiated and implemented on an urgent basis for better management of marine litter in the country, the report said.