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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Chennai scientists collect 53 kg waste from Elliot's beach

TNN | Aug 5, 2022, 04.51 AM IST



CHENNAI: More than 50% of the 53kg waste, collected over a 5000 sqm area at Elliot's Beach in Besant Nagar by city scientists in two hours on Thursday, was plastic. The scientists from National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) organised the clean-up as part of the 'Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar', an all-India event to clean 75 beaches in the country in 75 days.

The team of scientists and NCCR staff led by M Ravichandran, secretary, ministry of earth sciences and MV Ramana Murthy, director, NCCR, collected 1,526 litter items in the uncleaned area of the beach. NCCR scientist Pravakar Mishra said most of the waste was from recreational and tourism activities like food wrappers, plastic bags, plastic bottles and

caps, liquor bottles, cigarette packets and butts, thermocol and face masks. It had 50% plastic, 25% glass, 13% paper, 11.5% rubber, 0.4% metal and 0.1% cloth.

"In the clean coast index, Elliot's beach can be categorised as moderately clean. The number of plastic items like straws, spoons and forks has reduced to some extent due to the regular cleaning by the corporation," he said.

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The team still collected 11% plastic spoons, 5% straws and 13% cigarette packets scattered on the cleaned-up beach. As these items were found despite a ban on single-use plastics being in place since July 1, NCCR scientists said that it was time that the state strictly implements the ban. The team also collected 426 small-sized litter weighing 2kg over an 800sqm area already cleaned by the civic body.