

Mandalam Season Anti-plastic Drive Begins

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Alappuzha: The Mandalam season cleaning drive was launched at Kaipuram near Muhamma on Sunday to make the Vembanad lake free from plastic and other non-degradable materials. The drive will continue throughout the 41-day pilgrimage season.

The campaign is being carried out jointly by the Ashoka Trust for Research in

Ecology and Environment, Vembanad Nature Club, Forest Department, Yuva Keli Arts and Sports Club, Kaipuram, and Muhamma and Vembanad Lake Protection Forums.

P Thilothaman MLA inaugurated the cleaning drive by launching an anti-plastic campaign at the mangrove forest cover at Pathiramanal Island. Clam Action Council convenor K A Salim, ATREE programme officer Ashish

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Mathew George, Muhamma panchayat president Deepa Ajith Kumar and Environ-

mental activist K M Poovu spoke.

Last year, during the drive, 75 sacks of plastic materials were collected from the lake. It was used for road construction in Muhamma panchayat. The campaign has been launched among the fisherfolk and clam collectors of the 13 Lake Protection Forums. According to the clam collectors, it is an opportunity for them to show their gratitude to the lake

which provides them the means of their livelihood. The campaign was a success last year as many of the fishermen collected plastic waste even after the mandalam season. This year, more Lake Protection Forums and fishermen have decided to join the drive. Nearly 200 sacks of plastic waste was collected from the lake during the last three seasons and it was used for laying foundation for panchayat roads, they said.