

Mangrove restoration project to be launched along Kerala coast

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THE HINDU BUREAU



R. Balachandran, chairman of Buimerc Foundation, hands over the consent letter for the creation and conservation of mangroves at Vypeen to G.N. Hariharan, executive director of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), in the presence of Dr. V. Shakeela, Kerala director of MSSRF, on Wednesday. | Photo Credit: R.K. Nithin

Buimerc Foundation in collaboration with M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) will launch a three-year mangrove restoration project along the Kerala coast as part of efforts to protect the coastal ecosystem.

The first year pilot programme will cover 10 km along the Vypeen coast during 2025 and see the development of 20,000 saplings for planting and distribution to places facing shortage of saplings.

Setting up a mangrove field school to educate young people and local communities about the importance of sustainable coastal management is part of the programme, said Buimerc chairman R. Balachandran here on Wednesday.

The mangrove field school will be led by Murukesan, known as the 'Mangrove Man of Kochi', under the guidance of MSSRF. The team at the field school will collaborate with local bodies, residents, and local organisations to implement the restoration programme.

The initiative is to equip people, especially youth, with the tools and knowledge to participate in conservation efforts, said G.N. Hariharan, executive director of MSSRF.

Ernakulam has a 46-km coastline accounting for 8% of Kerala's total coastline. The coast is home to a rich mangrove biodiversity, which faces threat due to urban expansion, unplanned land use, and environmental degradation.

The mangrove conservation programme will include seed collection, developing and nurturing a field nursery, planting saplings and monitoring their growth. The Rhizophora Mangrove Field School and Nursery at Vypeen aims to preserve and restore the fast depleting mangrove vegetation, strengthen coastal resilience, and foster community-driven conservation.

Mr. Hariharan said the MSSRF has had wide experience in the area in other parts of India, and that the experience would be useful in the Kochi programme.

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