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# Students plant 2k mangrove saplings

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Kochi: Joining an initiative to increase green cover on coastal areas in the district, a group of engineering students in the district planted around 2,000 mangrove saplings in Valappu beach in the city on Friday.

The programme was organized by the national service scheme unit of KMEA Engineering College, Edathala, with the support of social forestry wing of the forest department.

Around 70 students participated in the planting of the saplings on the wetland areas along the beach. Vypeen native Murukeshan, who recently led an initiative to clean mangrove areas in the backwaters near Marine Drive, provided support to students in planting the saplings.

NSS programme officer Muhammed Yasar C A said that camp for planting saplings was organized with an aim to make the students more aware on the importance of protecting mangroves, which play a crucial role in preventing natural calamities in coastal regions.

Sidhumathi C R, range forest officer of Ernakulam division, who inaugurated the programme, said that the forest authorities were planning to plant more than 10,000 saplings in various parts of the city next year.

Last year, we had managed to plant more than 5,000 saplings in the district, she said.

Deputy range officer Rajendra Babu K C said that the department was planning to plant only indigenous variety of plants on the coastal areas next year.

“It was following the findings that the vegetations, especially mangrove forests, along the coast had effectively prevented sea erosions and Tsunamis, that the forest authorities decided to increase green cover along the coast”, he said.

He added that more saplings of different plants are ready in nurseries and they would be planted in other parts of the district soon.