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Two more Indian beaches get 'Blue Flag': What is this coveted eco-label?

India now has 12 'blue' beaches, a certificate awarded by the prestigious international programme of cleanliness and environmental sustainability run by the global nonprofit Foundation for Environmental Education

By: **Explained Desk**

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WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter icons and a number '2'



Two beaches in Lakshadweep has been given Blue Flag. (Photo: Twitter@Bhupendra Yadav)

Two more beaches, both in Lakshadweep, have been accorded the 'Blue Flag' tag, putting them in an elite list of the world's cleanest and most eco-friendly "beaches, marinas and sustainable boating tourism operators".

India now has 12 "blue beaches", Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bhupender Yadav posted on Twitter on October 26. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the achievement, and said there is "a great amount of passion among our people to further coastal cleanliness".

Proud moment!

Two more Indian beaches have made it to the list of Blue Beaches. Minicoy, Thundi Beach and Kadmat Beach – both in Lakshadweep – are the proud entrants in the coveted list of Blue Beaches, an eco-label given to the cleanest beaches in the world.

[pic.twitter.com/i2bTdB5tJi](https://twitter.com/i2bTdB5tJi)

– Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) **October 26, 2022**

This is great! Congratulations, particularly to the people of Lakshadweep, for this feat. India's coastline is remarkable and there is also a great amount of passion among our people to further coastal cleanliness. <https://t.co/4gRsWussRt> – Narendra Modi (@narendramodi) October 26, 2022

The Blue Flag

The Blue Flag is an exclusive eco-label or certification that is given to coastal locations around the world as a badge of environmental honour. The Blue Flag programme is run by the Copenhagen, Denmark-headquartered Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), a nonprofit which, through its work, contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

According to the FEE, “the iconic Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised voluntary awards for beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism operators. In order to qualify for the Blue Flag, a series of stringent environmental, educational, safety, and accessibility criteria must be met and maintained.”

The Blue Flag programme started in 1987, initially in Europe. Certification is awarded annually. A total 5,042 beaches, marinas, and tourism boats in 48 countries have been awarded the label so far. A marina is a small harbour where mainly pleasure boats and yachts dock.

The certification is given by an international jury comprising members of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), besides FEE.

“Central to the ideals of the Blue Flag programme is the aim of connecting the public with their surroundings and encouraging them to learn more about their

environment,” the FEE says on its website, a goal that Prime Minister Modi too has flagged.

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Beaches in India

The two new beaches to have been awarded the eco-label are **Minicoy Thundi beach and Kadmat beach, both in Lakshadweep**. Minister Yadav described Thundi as “one of the most pristine and picturesque beaches in the archipelago where white sand is lined by turquoise blue water of the lagoon”, and said Kadmat is “especially popular with cruise tourists who visit the island for water sports”.

The other 10 Indian beaches on the list, according to the FEE site, are Shivrajpur in Gujarat's Devbhumi Dwarka district; Ghogla beach in Diu; Kasarkod (Uttara Kannada) and Padubidri (Udupi) in Karnataka; Kappad (Kozhikode) in Kerala; Eden beach in Puducherry; Kovalam (**Chennai**) in Tamil Nadu; Rushikonda (**Visakhapatnam**) in Andhra Pradesh; Golden beach in Puri, Odisha; and Radhanagar Swarajdeep in Andaman and Nicobar.

Kovalam and Eden got the Blue Flag last year. The other eight beaches received the certification in 2020, and were re-certified last year.

In October 2020, then Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar had said “**no Blue Flag nation has ever been awarded for 8 beaches in a single attempt**”. India had achieved an “outstanding feat”, and the award was a “global recognition of India's conservation and sustainable development efforts”, he had said.

Proud moment for India; all 8 beaches recommended by government gets coveted International #Blueflag Certification. @narendramodi
pic.twitter.com/j38BTnibl0

– Prakash Javadekar (@PrakashJavdekar) October 11, 2020

Do's and Don'ts

In January 2020, an Extraordinary Gazette Notification gave a list of permissible activities and facilities in the CRZ of the beaches, including islands, subject to maintaining a minimum distance of 10 metres from the High Tide Line (HTL), for the purposes of Blue Flag certification.

These included portable toilet blocks, change rooms and shower panels; solid waste management plant; solar power plant; purified drinking water facility; beach access pathways; landscaping lighting; seating benches and sit-out umbrellas; cloak room facility; safety watch towers and beach safety equipment; information boards and other signages; fencing; and parking facilities.

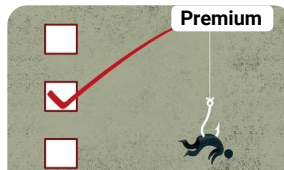
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The notification said that these activities and facilities **would be exempt from prior clearance** under the provisions of CRZ Notification, Island Protection Zone Notification and Island Coastal Regulation Zone Notifications.

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