



"Everyone in this world should sleep without fear, at least for one night. There should be at least one day when there is no violence. Everyone should eat to their fill at least for one day. This is my dream" - Amma

Amritians on a cleaning drive



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Sunday morning usually means lazing in bed with a cup of coffee. Last Sunday (Oct 31) was different. Hundreds of students of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham went out of the campus on a clean-up mission to Coimbatore city.

Busloads of students fanned out in different parts of the city, like Ettimadai Pirivu, Kuniyathur, Chavadi and Ukkadam to clean the roadsides, remove garbage and tidy up public toilets, as curious members of the public first watched and then joined in the drive.

Called 'Amala Bharatham, Amrita Bharatham,' the mission was inspired by Mata Amritanandamayi, Chancellor of Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham. The volunteers spent over five hours cleaning up the city, from 7.30 in the morning to 1 in the afternoon, during which they collected mounds of garbage.

The segregated garbage was then taken to a dumping yard in Vellalore Panchayat where there are facilities to recycle.

Mohammed Rafi, an auto driver at Ukkadam, gave thumbs up for the mission and said that those who litter and dirty public places should be punished. "This is a good lesson for us. We will ensure that Ukkadam is kept clean like this always. If we see anyone littering, we will request them not do so," he said.

Gurudas Chaitanya, a disciple of Amma, said plans were under way to clean up 600 kilometers in Kerala with the help of 6,400 students divided into 74 groups.

"It is being supported by the government, municipalities, police and the public."

Said Akash, a 2nd year mechanical engineering student, "It is really a good experience for me to engage in such a good activity. I would love to come for the next phase of the clean-up drive too.

"We found lots of plastic bags and cups, cigarettes, household wastes all over the area. The organizers provided us with gloves and tools to collect the garbage," he said and added that stiff fines should be imposed on people who litter.

Students were provided with refreshments like butter milk, lemon juice and banana at regular intervals.

Mr.A. L. Pazhaniyappan, estate office superintendent at the campus, stated "It is an excellent effort taken by Amma and it would soon involve other institutions. This cleaning activity would enable the students to understand the dignity of labour".

He said Vallikavu near Kollam in Kerala was the first place where the clean-up drive was successfully launched and similar campaigns would soon be launched by the Amrita institutions in Bangalore and other places.

Amrita institutions have already started work on constructing toilets every three kilometers along the highway in Kerala. The second phase of the clean-up drive will start on November 13. Amma's inspiration would hopefully transform Coimbatore into one of the cleanest cities in the country.

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**-Mohammed Rafi,
Auto Driver**

