



Blue Flag Certification

Recently, the Union Environment Ministry has selected 12 beaches in India to contend for a 'Blue Flag' certification

- The Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised voluntary eco-labels awarded to 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.
- There are nearly 33 criteria that must be met to qualify for a Blue Flag certification, such as the water meets certain quality standards, having waste disposal facilities, being disabled-friendly, have first aid equipment etc.
- The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education).
- FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education) was established in France in 1985 and got extended to areas outside Europe since 2001
- Spain tops the list with 566 such beaches; Greece and France follow with 515 and 395, respectively.
- To help Indian beaches meet these criteria, the Ministry has allowed structures such container toilet blocks, change rooms, shower panels, mini greywater treatment plants in an enclosed structure, mini solid waste recycling plants and off-grid solar photovoltaic panels, provided they are a minimum 10 metres from the high tide line.

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