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The Sultanate is so clean that smallest of the litter catches the attention of tourists and any irresponsible behaviour irks them

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH

Don't litter in this beautiful country, but create awareness to keep all tourist spots neat and clean and protect the flora and fauna and marine life as the country is fast emerging as a destination for nature lovers.

This is the message from most of the tourists when they are asked of feedback on their visit. They are impressed with general cleanliness of the country and the value that it maintains for the protection of environment, heritage and culture.

"The country is so clean that smallest of the litter catches our attention and any irresponsible behaviour irks us. It, however, is painful sometimes when we see people leaving trash after enjoying nice time at the beaches or at some clean places otherwise," said Anja Merk a cyclist from Germany.

She started her Oman trip from Musandam. After touring beautiful Musandam she took a ferry to Shinas. From there she went to the mountains, up to the plateau of Jebel Shams, followed by Ithri, Rastaq, Al Hamra and finally took the road up from Al Hamra and down through Hat to Wadi Bani Awf. She also visited Bahla and Jabrin. Went to Nakhl and back to the coast to Muscat, all the way east to Sur and then came down the coast to Salalah. "Saw the baobabs in Wadi Hinna, went to Mughalil Beach. I also visited Masrah and Ras Madrakah," she said.

All the sites, according to her, were beautiful and people were co-operative all through her journey. She called for some kind of awareness among people — the tour operators, local people and tourists as well — to help keep this beautiful country clean and don't litter here and there. "The country is so clean that it pinches when we see someone littering or throwing something out of their running cars... Those scenes are also not too many, but what I feel is, even that should not happen," said Merk.

The climbers, Read Macadam and Liam Lonsdale, were in Salalah recently in connection with the clean up drive of Jabal Shamsan recently. They put stress on preserving the wild spaces of Oman. They called for education and awareness against littering at all levels and also helping with the resources for rubbish disposal would help to preserve the wilderness as an asset for future generations of local people and visitors alike.

Anissa Kirch of National Tours did a special cleaning project this April to mark the Earth Day. She has been very active in doing cleaning drives at tourist spots in Salalah. She was part of 'Clean Wadi Darbat drive' which was done last year in association with Office of the Conservation of Environment, Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Health and Taqah Municipality last year. She also took part in clean Jabal Shamsan drive.

"It makes sense to keep the tourist spots clean and this becomes our responsibility as tour operators... One day while walking on a beach I saw a man collecting trash during his walk. I thought, actually everyone can collect one bag of trash at any time at any place during a normal walk. One bag of trash can really make a big difference, especially if everyone of us collects," she said.

She gave a very wise suggestion to tour guides to keep one bag of trash box in their cars to collect all the trash the people produce during tours. "On Earth Day one year ago we did our successful Wadi Darbat Clean-up project. This year we decided to expand the Earth Day to an earth month."

Don't litter, please!

