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Students, teachers unite to recycle plastic in Moira

Mapusa: After devising a technology to converting used plastic into plastic sheets, students and teachers of St Xavier's high school in Moira organized a two-day science exhibition with the theme 'Shrushti - nurture nature' at the school complex recently. A cooking competition using solar energy was also held parallel to the exhibition.

Teachers and students devised a simple technology of recycling used plastic, using Teflon cloth and polythene thermo press (costing around 3,000), and converting it into 100m long plastic sheets.

"We used waste milk packets to prepare 100m long and 2 ft broad plastic sheets using this technology. Plastic with any amount of microns can be recycled using this technology," Vijaydatta Lotlikar, a teacher at the school said.

"We will send an application to be included in the Limca book of world records as we have made the longest sheet out of recycled milk packets," Lotlikar said. We wish to spread awareness that plastic is not a menace until we make it menace, claimed a student.

The procedure used to recycling the plastic bags involved

boiling of the greasy bags and then washing them with soap solution. The dried plastic bags are then placed on a plain surface and thermo pressed with a heating device (polythene thermo press), which are then covered with a heat resistant cloth (teflon cloth) placed over the bags. The polythene bags melt and form a sheet of plastic. This process, according to the teachers, is non-polluting as the polythene is not totally melted but due to the indirect heat energy, atoms of polythene loosen and combine with one another on cooling. Plastic sheets can be reshaped and used in making articles such as roofing sheets, doors, partitions, bags, lamp shades, etc.

Twenty-four residents of Moira participated in the solar cooking competition using solar energy. "As the food is cooked from all the sides, it is very nutritious and tasty," said Dr Pramod Pathak, a member secretary of Goa Energy Development Agency. With the assistance of their teachers, the students also made a solar hot air dryer, a solar fan and a solar water heater.