

DATE : 19 FEB 2019

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



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Tullahan as river transport floated

By Kuhlin Ceslie Gacula

The Tullahan River can be developed as an alternative transport route once it is rehabilitated as part of Manila Bay's clean-up, Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones said yesterday.

The river stretches 7.6 miles or 15 kilometers, flowing from the La Mesa Reservoir in Quezon City through Malabon and Valenzuela before emptying into Manila Bay.

Leones said the Tullahan River is a potential transport route for people and goods, the realization of which can ease heavy traffic on Metro Manila roads.

"If we can clean up and revive Tullahan River, this waterway can serve that purpose," he said following the inspection of the river this month in preparation for its clean-up.

Debris and silt have reduced the water-carrying capacity of the waterway.

Leones cited several examples of waterways that are helping promote mobility, among them Venice's canals and Singapore's and Thailand's bays and rivers that also serve as floating markets.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has scheduled the dredging of the Tullahan River this year to remove silt and trash that have accumulated over the years.

The debris also reduces the water-carrying capacity of the river while affecting its biodiversity.

"If we clean up that river, there's a chance for species to eventually live there again," he said.

The clean-up drive of Tullahan is part of the activities in line with the Manila Bay rehabilitation.



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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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Manila Bay reclamation opposed

By **ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ**
and **RIA FERNANDEZ**

Residents of Baseco compound in Tondo, along with fisherfolk and environmental groups, marched to Manila City Hall Monday morning to protest the four Manila Bay reclamation projects that have allegedly been approved by city hall.

Protesters claimed that around 100,000 residents will be displaced and lose their livelihood to the reclamation project that will cover an estimated 1,342 hectares of Manila Bay.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the project includes the 50-hectare expansion of the existing Manila Harbour Centre proposed by R-II Builders, Inc., another 50-hectare

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Manila Bay reclamation... ◀1

Baseco Rehabilitation & Development Inc. (BRADI) reclamation project, 40-hectare Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) reclamation project, and 407-hectare City of Pearl reclamation project proposed by Chinese-owned UAA Kinming Development Corporation.

The said projects had reportedly been approved by the city government.

"The consistent effort of the government and volunteers from grass-roots sectors will be useless and futile if large part of Manila Bay will be reclaimed and giant establishments will be installed afterwards," Pamalakaya national chairman Fernando Hicap said.

"This is far from the rehabilitation that we have expected; displacing us from our community in exchange for big-ticket infrastructure projects that would inflict more damage to Manila Bay's marine ecosystem and biodiversity. The rehabilitation we have been upholding ever since was the revival of mangrove forests and seagrasses that serve as fish habitat and sanctuaries," he added.

The group defended the informal settler families from the claim of government that they are the main source of pollution for lack of proper sanitation and septic tank, saying this is only a reflection of a chronic poverty that they experience.

"They can't even afford to have a decent housing, how could the government expect a proper sanitation then? Relocating them away from their source of livelihood will never be the solution to uplift their lives. Most of them are fisherfolk who subsist in Manila Bay by fishing or catching mussel shells (tahong)," Hicap said.

"There is a whopping P43-billion budget for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. It is more than enough to provide proper sanitation and solid waste management to communities instead of wiping them out for reclamation projects," he added.

Reclamation-free zone

"Bogus ang kaunlaran na sinasabi ng pamahalaan dahil sa ilalim ng reclamation program nito, libo-libong pamilya ang mapapalayas (The development which the government is advocating is

a sham because thousands of families will be evicted under this reclamation program)," said Alexander Rosales, spokesman of Manila Urban Poor Network.

"Lumalabas ngayon na parte ng reklamasyon ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay para lalong akitin ang mga investor at mga negosyante para mamuhunan sa itatayong proyekto na iilan lamang ang makikinabang (It now appears that the rehabilitation of Manila Bay is part of the reclamation project to attract investors and businessmen to invest in the projects that will only benefit a few people)," he added.

The project, they said will result in severe flooding.

Because of this, Nilad Environmental Network urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to declare Manila Bay a reclamation-free zone and urged the agency to be transparent in its rehabilitation master plan.

"We expressed alarm over the real reasons of rehabilitation of Manila Bay. DENR should show its seriousness in restoring rich and historical life of Manila Bay by issuing a suspension on all reclamation plans that will destroy its biodiversity," the group said.

For his part, Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada said the government's reclamation plan will benefit the city as it will provide at least 500,000 jobs and boost income from Real Property Tax (RPT).

He denied claims that residents, specifically in Baseco, will be relocated as a result of the reclamation project.

"Of course not... It is already reclaimed for the housing of the poor. I will not allow (it to be taken away). It is owned by the city government," Estrada said.

The local chief executive initially invited the protesters for a dialogue but the group declined later on since only two were allowed to discuss the problem with him.

From Manila City hall, the protesters trooped to Malacañang to deliver a letter to President Duterte and manifesto signed by 1,500 residents stating their opposition to the reclamation projects in Manila Bay.



Squatter families fear eviction amid Manila Bay land-reclamation 'frenzy'

AROUND 45,000 squatter families who took residence near the compound of the Bataan Shipping and Engineering Co. (Baseco) are facing possible eviction to pave the way for the massive reclamation projects along Manila Bay in Manila's fifth district.

On Monday, members of the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakayang Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), together with Anakpawis party-list, led a protest gathering at Mendiola in Manila to denounce the plan.

According to Pamalakaya, a total of 547 hectares of reclama-

tion projects will be carried out in the coastal waters of Manila's thickly populated urban poor community for the expansion of existing ports and for mixed use.

These also include the 50-hectare expansion of the existing Manila Harbour Centre proposed by R-II Builders Inc., another 50-hectare Baseco Rehabilitation & Development Inc. reclamation project, the 40-hectare Philippine Reclamation Authority reclamation project and the biggest, the 407-hectare City of Pearl reclamation project proposed by Chinese-owned UAA Kinming Development Corp.

All the said projects were already given a go signal by the local government unit of Manila.

More than 45,000 urban poor and fisherfolk residents will be displaced if the reclamation projects push through, Pamalakaya said.

"The consistent effort of the government and volunteers from grassroots sectors will be useless and futile if a large part of Manila Bay will be reclaimed and giant establishments will be installed afterward," Fernando Hicap, national coordinator of Pamalakaya said in a news statement.

"This is far from the rehabilitation

that we have expected; displacing us from our community in exchange for big-ticket infrastructure projects that would inflict more damage to Manila Bay's marine ecosystem and biodiversity. The rehabilitation we have been upholding ever since was the revival of mangrove forests and sea grasses that serve as fish habitat and sanctuaries," Hicap added.

Hicap, a former Anakpawis representative, took the cudgels for the squatter families and defended them against the accusation of the government that they are the main source of pollution for lacking proper sanitation and hygiene. *Jonathan L. Mayuga*



Manila Bay reclamation plan opposed

Some residents of Baseco compound and Tondo, along with environmental and fisherfolk groups, marched to Manila City Hall on Monday morning to voice their opposition to the reclamation plan in Manila Bay.

Protesters claimed that around 100,000 residents are at risk of losing their homes and jobs with the different reclamation projects which will cover an estimated 1,342 hectares of Manila Bay.

"Bogus ang kaunlaran na sinasabi ng pamahalaan dahil sa ilalim ng reclamation program nito, libo-libong pamilya ang mapapalayas," said Alexander Rosales, spokesperson of Manila Urban Poor Network.

"Lumalabas ngayon na parte ng reklamasyon ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay para lalong akitin ang mga investor at mga

negosyante para mamuhunan sa itatayong proyekto na ilan lamang ang makikinabang," he added.

Aside from this, they cited the program's negative impacts on the environment such as severe flooding.

And so, Nilad Environmental Network urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to declare Manila Bay as a reclamation-free zone and be transparent in its rehabilitation master plan.

"We expressed alarm over the real reasons of rehabilitation of Manila Bay. DENR should show its seriousness in restoring rich and historical life of Manila Bay by issuing a suspension on all reclamation plans that will destroy its biodiversity," the group said.

For his part, Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada said that the government's reclamation plan will benefit the capital city as it is seen to provide at least 500,000 jobs and boost income from Real Property Tax (RPT).

But he denied claims that residents, specifically in Baseco, will be relocated because of it. **(Ria Fernandez)**



RESIDENTS of Baseco, Tondo, who are facing eviction due to the impending reclamation plan in Manila Bay hold a protest rally in front of the Manila City hall. (Ali Vicoy)



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Baseco residents rally vs bay reclamation

RESIDENTS from Baseco yesterday rallied in front of the Manila City Hall and in Mendiola to protest any planned reclamation at the Manila Bay.

Alexander Rosales, spokesperson of the Manila Urban Poor Network, said about 100,000 residents are going to lose their homes if the projects New Manila Bay International Community, Manila Water Front, Manila Horizon, Solar City and Harbour Centre, reportedly totalling P164.67 billion, push through.

'Bogus ang kaunlaran na sinasabi ng pamahalaan dahil sa ilalim ng reclamation program nito, libu-libong pamilya ang mapapalayas. Lumalabas na parte ng reklamasyon ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon sa Manila Bay para lalong akitin ang

mga investor at mga negosyante para mamuhunan sa itatayong proyekto na iilan lamang ang makikinabang,' Rosales said.

Among those who joined the protest were members of the Baseco People's Alliance (BPA), Alyansa ng mga Mamamayan sa Tondo (AL-

MATON) and Samahan ng mga Maralita sa Temporary Housing (SMTH).

Rosales said the projected reclamation poses a threat to the safety of residents near the Manila Bay since water levels will be higher and will cause greater floods.

Itchie G. Cabayan



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Mga kandidatong pro-Manila Bay reclamation pinaboboykot

Lumusob sa tulay ng Mendiola ang mga miyembro ng Pamalakaya, Kadamay at Anakpawis para suportahan ang laban ng mga taga-Baseco sa Maynila na tumututol sa reclamation ng Manila Bay.

Sinasabing umaabot sa mahigit 500 hektarya ang sasakupin ng mga reclamation project sa Manila Bay at libo-libong pobrang pamilya ang maaapektuhan.

Ayon sa Pamalakaya at Kadamay, nasa kabuuang 547 hektarya

ng Manila Bay ang ireclaim at tinatayang nasa 45,000 bilang ng mga urban poor at mangingisda ang tatamaan.

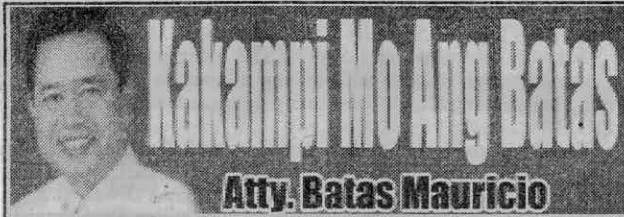
Suportado ni Anakpawis Party-list Rep. Ariel Casilao ang karangin ng mga residente na madadale kapag inaryarya ang reklamasyon.

Ayon sa solon, ginagamit lamang ng gobyerno na palusot ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay para sa ipinopormang mga reclamation project lalo

na nang i-take over ng Presidente ang Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) sa pamamagitan ng Executive Order (EO) 74.

Pinayuhan ni Casilao ang mga botante na gawing isyu ang Manila Bay reclamation at huwag iboto ang mga kandidato na pabor sa reklamasyon.

"We urge the people to oppose the machinations, or even mass deception, for reclamation projects," ayon pa kay Casilao. **(Aries Cano)**



Atty. Batas Mauricio

Sa mga katanungan, tumawag sa (02) 927 7226, 0917 984 24 68, 0918 574 0193 at 0922 833 43 96. Mag-email po kayo sa batasmauricio@yahoo.com, o sumulat po kayo sa 18 D Mahiyain corner Mapagkawanggawa, Teachers Village, Diliman, Quezon City.

Nagpagamit nga ba si Keng laban kay Ressa?

INSPIRASYON SA BUHAY: "... 'Ano ang mapapala ng tao makamtan man niya ang buong mundo kung mapapariwara naman ang kaniyang kaluluwa?' ..." (si Jesus, ang ating Diyos at Tagapagligtas at Diyos Ama, Anak, at Espiritu Santo, sa Mateo 16:26, Bibliya).

MGA KONTRATA SA MANILA BAY RECLAMATION, DAPAT LINAWIN: Dapat magbigay ng agarang paglilinaw sa ngayon ang Pangulong Duterte at ang Office of the President sa kasalukuyang katayuan ng mga aprubado ng mga kontrata na nagbigay sa ilang mga pribadong negosyante ng karapatang magtambak ng lupa sa malaking bahagi ng Manila Bay mula Bataan hanggang Cavite.

Mainit kasi ang isyu ng mga kontratang ito sa ngayon, lalo pa at ang isa sa mga malalaking kompanya na naiulat na nabigyan ng karapatang magtambak sa Manila Bay upang makakuha doon ng 1,333 hektaryang lupa ay ang Century Peak Corporation (CPC), na pag-aari naman ng Century Peak Metal Holdings Corporation o CPMHC (basahin po ito sa <https://www.philstar.com/business/2018/07/15/1833542/century-peak-picked-undertake-ppp-reclamation-project-cavite>).

Ang CPC at ang CPMHC ay iniulat namang parehong pag-aari ng negosyanteng si Wilfredo Keng, ang complainant sa kasong libelo na naging dahilan upang makulong ang mamamahayag na si Maria Ressa. May mga akusasyong naglalabasan na nagpagamit si Keng sa administrasyong Duterte upang sikilin ang karapatan sa pamamahayag ni Ressa dahil sa laki ng kontra-

tang kaniyang pinasok sa Manila Bay reclamation.

NAGPAGAMIT NGA BA SI KENG SA GOBYERNONG DUTERTE LABAN KAY RESSA? Sa isang tweet (o kalatas sa Twitter) ng isang "Miss Magie @MiaMagdalena" noong Pebrero 16, 2019, ganito ang kaniyang sinabi: "Keng gets Manila Bay reclamation projects. Sabi na nga ba. Tarantado talaga ang Lord Digong and his alipores." Maliwanag pa sa sikat ng ang ibig ipalabas ni "Miss Magie @MiaMagdalena" sa tweet niyang ito.

Na, ginawa ng Pangulong Duterte ang pagpapakulong kay Ressa na isa sa matitindi niyang kritiko mula pa noong 2016, kasi nabigyan ang nagreklamo ng libelo laban sa mamamahayag, si Keng, ng malaking kontrata sa Manila Bay ng gobyerno ng Pangulo. Ibinatay ni "Miss Magie @MiaMagdalena" ang kaniyang akusasyon sa ulat na mababasa sa Internet link na inilagay sa taas nito.

Ang tweet na ito ay inilabas muli ng isang iginagalang na kolumnista, si G. Federico Dik Pascual Jr. noon namang Pebrero 17, 2019, kaya naman dumadami na ang nakakabasa ng akusasyon ni "Miss Magie @MiaMagdalena". Sa aking pananaw, upang maging malinawang lahat, dapat maglabas ng Pangulong Duterte at ang Malacanang ng paglilinaw ukol sa kontratang pinasok ni Keng para sa reclamation sa Manila Bay.

MGA ISYUNG LEGAL SA REKLAMASYON SA MANILA BAY NOON PANG 2013: Magkaganunman, may mga nauna na akong isinulat dito sa "Kakampi Mo Ang Batas" anim na taon na ang nakararaan ukol sa isyu ng pagtatambak ng lupa sa Manila Bay bilang reclamation projects. Sa ikalilina ng isyu, minarapat kong ilabas muli ang ilan sa mga isinulat kong ito. Basahin po natin.

Noong Oktubre 16, 2013 ganito po ang isinulat ko: "May karapatan ba ang isang pamahalaang lokal... na magsagawa ng reclamation ng... (ekta-) ektaryang lupa mula sa isang bahagi ng Manila Bay, upang ibigay lamang ang na-reclaim na lupa sa isang pribadong kompanya? Kung sasangguniin natin ang Section 17 ng Republic Act 7160, ang Local Government Code of 1991, lilitaw na ang sagot ay wala itong karapatan.

"Bakit naman wala? Kasi, sa ilalim ng Section 17 ng Code, maliwanag na ang isang (pamahalaang lokal) ay maaari lamang magkaroon ng 'reclamation project' kung matutupad nito ang dalawang kondisyones: una, ang reclamation project ay nararapat lamang na tumugon sa mga pangangailangan ng mga naninirahan sa lungsod at, pangalawa, kailangang ito ay pondohan ng pera lamang ng siyudad..."



Bay yields truckloads styro, plastic

By Michael Pingol

Three truckloads of garbage were collected by firefighters who volunteered to help in the clean-up of Manila Bay, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) said yesterday.

Most of the trash collected behind the Manila Film Center last Sunday were made of styrofoam and plastic, according to Fire Officer 3 Leo Azores of the Operations department of BFP National Capital Region (NCR).

About 293 personnel from

different cities and municipality of BFP-NCR participated in the clean-up drive led by NCR Fire Director Sr. Supt. Wilberto Kwan Tiu.

DPWH sets ramp for dredging excavator.

Meanwhile, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) started preparations to dredge Manila Bay by setting up a ramp for an

amphibious excavator.

According to the DPWH, bathymetric or depth measurement and ocular inspection, as well as water quality tests, were done at Manila Bay and the Navotas River.

DPWH's plan is to dredge garbage-laden mud based on results of the bathymetric survey that would determine the amount of material that must be removed.

The dredging will focus on the Navotas River, Estero de Vitas in Tondo and the 100 meters from the shoreline of Manila Bay, from the Manila Yacht Club to US Embassy.





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DPWH HANDA NA SA PAGHUKAY SA MANILA BAY

NAGHAHANDA na ang Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) sa paghukay sa Manila Bay.

Naglagay na ng harang ang DPWH sa bay walk sa kahabaan ng Roxas Boulevard para walang makapag-

swimming at naglagay na rin ng isang ramp para sa amphibious excavator.

Ayon sa DPWH, nagsagawa na sila ng bathymetric o pagsukat sa lalim ng tubig at ocular inspection para sa Manila Bay at Navotas River.

Kabilang sa tinukoy na dredging sites ng DPWH ang Navotas River, Estero de Vitas sa Tondo at 100 metro mula sa pampang ng Manila Bay at mula sa Manila Yacht Club patungong US Embassy.

JOPEL P.



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Dredging operation sa Manila Bay sisimulan na ng DPWH

Kasado na ang gagawing dredging operation ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) sa Manila Bay bilang bahagi ng rehabilitation plan dito.

Isang amphibious excavator na rin ang inihahanda ng DPWH para sa nasabing paghuhukay.

Nauna rito ay nilagyan na ng bagod ang kabuuan ng baywalk area para hindi na makapunta sa gilid ng dagat ang ilang mga tao na gustong magpakuha ng litrato at mag-swimming.

Sa kanilang advisory,

sinabi ng DPWH na nagsagawa na sila ng "bathymetric" o pagsusukat ng lalim ng Manila Bay pati na rins a ilog ng Navotas City.

Ito umano ang kanilang magiging guide sa kung gaano kalalim ang dapat na gawin sa Manila Bay.

Magsasagawa rin ng hawalay na dredging operations ang DPWH sa Estero de Vitas sa Tondo at sa

Navotas river habang naka-sentro naman ang kanilang unang operasyon sa pagitan ng Manila Yatch Club at US Embassy na bahagi ng lawa ng Maynila.

Sa mga susunod na araw ay papayagan pa rin na magsagawa ng paglilinis sa paligid nito ang ilang mga volunteers na nagsimula sa kanilang lingguhang gawain kamakailan.



Sapol

NI JARIUS BONDOC



Manila Bay rehab: tatlong pagtuunan

TILA imposible ang inutos ni President Duterte na rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay. Sinimulan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa ilang hotel sa harap ng dagat. Iniinspeksiyon ng Laguna Lake Development Authority ang 204 gusali sa gilid ng Pasig River. Binabalak ang relokasyon ng squatters sa Estero de San Antonio Abad, kung saan ang coliform ay 1.3 bilyon kada litro.

Pero sinasabi nila na sa Disyembre 2019 ay malalanguyan na ang dagat. Nakakaduda tuloy kung malawakan ang gagawing rehab. Aba'y libu-libong sewage treatment plants ang itatatag sa mga gusali at subdivisions, milyun-milyong poso-negro ang dapat hukayin sa mga bahayan,

at henerasyon ng maling pagbabasura ang dapat baguhin.

Tatlo ang dapat pagtuunan ng pansin, ani environment lawyer Tony Oposa: basura, sewage, at relokasyon.

Nais niyang dakilain ang mga pasimuno ng garbage segregation, composting, at recycling. Kilalanin ang mga naghihiwalay ng basa at tuyong basura, at nagpapatakbo ng materials recovery facilities. Sa gan'ung paraan, tutularan sila ng madla. Samantala, madaling mabibisto at mapaparusahan ang matitigas ang ulo na salaula.

Tungkulin ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System ang mga kanal. Pinangangasiwaan nito ang concessionaires na Manila Water at Maynilad Resources. Simula 1997 sumisingil sila ng sewerage fee, kasama ng buwanang singil sa customers. Dapat may sewage treatment plants sila para malinis na tubig lang ang aagos patungong Manila Bay. Tanungin sila, ani Oposa, kung bakit lumala ang bacteria level ng dagat mula isang milyon tungo sa 330 milyon units kada cubic meter.

Sa relokasyon, daan-daang ektarya ng idle lands ang pag-aari ng gobyerno. Maaring magtayo roon ng tenement housing na may sapat na mga plaza at sewerage. Sa loob dapat ng lungsod para hindi mapalayo ang mga maninirahan sa kanilang hanapbuhay.



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Manila Standard

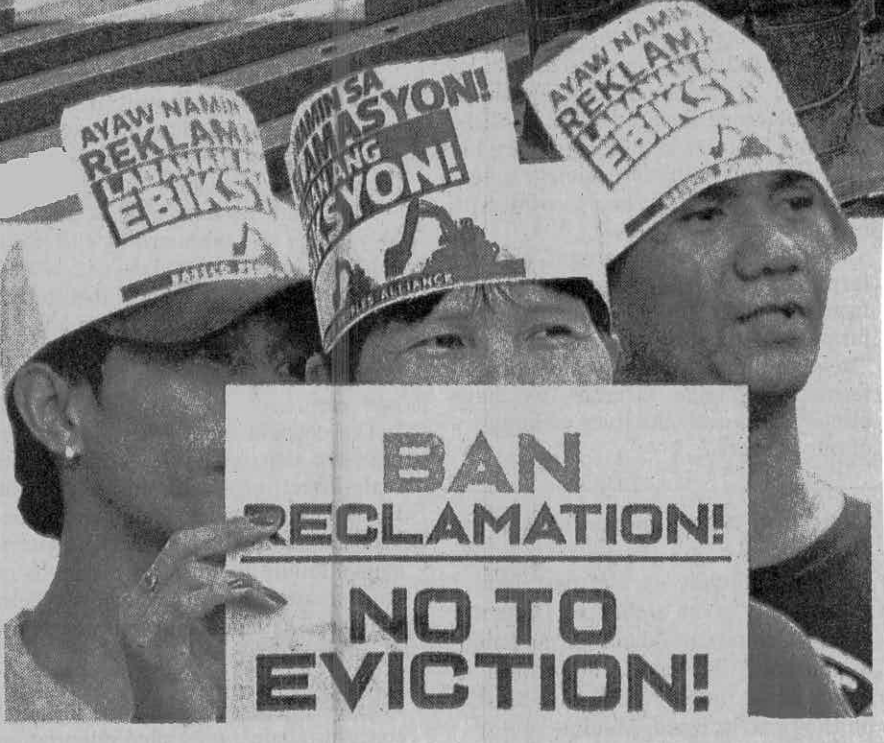


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EVICTIION AND REHABILITATION.

Public Works and Highways workers assemble Monday the Amphibious Excavator to be used for the rehabilitation of the natural harbor Manila Bay, strategically located around the capital, while residents of Baseco in Manila's waterfront district of Tondo who are facing eviction (below) due to the impending reclamation plan hold a protest rally in front of City Hall. They argue the Manila Bay rehab is just a front for private businesses to build their hotels and casinos under the government's 'Build, Build, Build' program. **Norman Cruz**





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Super machine Department of Public Works and Highways workers assemble an amphibious excavator which is reputed to radically speed up the Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

BOB DUNGO JR.



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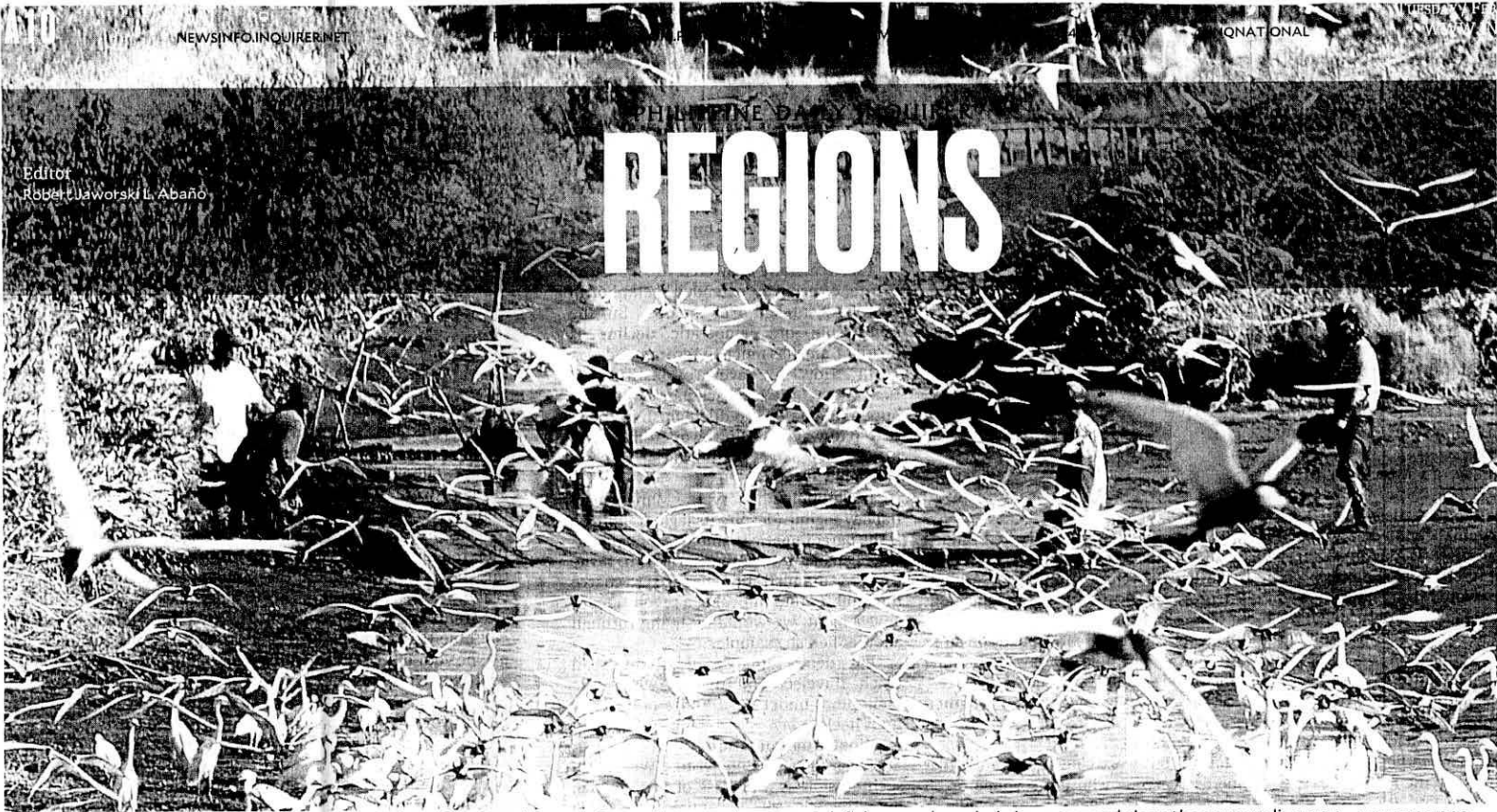
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Robert Jaworski L. Abaño

PHILIPPINE REGIONS



FEAST FOR BIRDS Migratory birds flock to a fishpond in Binmaley town, Pangasinan province, to catch fish as workers drain its water and clean the surrounding area. —WILLIE LOMBABO



PONDS, FARMS AS FOOD SOURCES

MORE BIRD SPECIES SEEN IN PANGASINAN WETLANDS

By Yolanda Sotelo
@yzsoteloINQ

BINMALEY, PANGASINAN—More migratory birds are seeking food and warm temporary habitats in this town's wetlands, although local environment officials have noted other bird species are shying away from their usual abode.

"Some birds come and go every year, but this year other species have arrived while some old ones are gone or have yet to arrive," said Angelica Esteban, ecosystem management specialist of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Dagupan City.

Climate change might have altered the migration schedule of these birds, which come from China and Japan, Esteban said.

"While in the past years, they start coming here in September, now their migration starts in November. They even invited new species to the Biec wetlands here," she said.

She said four more bird species—black-crowned night heron, brown shrike, barn swallow and little egret—were spotted for the first time in the wetlands.

Among these species, more than 200 barn swallows were seen in the area, based on the latest count of local environment personnel.

Missing birds

Esteban said they had yet to see two bird species that were normally spotted here. "Missing this year are the plover and the green shank. Last year, we recorded 20 plovers and 600 green shanks," she said.

Also spotted in the Biec wetlands were 1,000 black-winged stilts, 500 common terns, 25 grey herons, 10 little grebes, seven great egrets and five moorhens.

Esteban said the number of black-winged stilts increased from 400 last year.

More egrets have found a new home at Barangay Nibaliw in San Fabian town, she said.

Shortage of food

While there were 800 intermediate egrets and 120 great egrets spotted in Biec last year, the number dropped to only three and seven, respectively, this year.

"Perhaps this is because most of the fishponds were already back-filled that [the egrets] could hardly find food there," Esteban said.

While migratory birds are a sight to behold, these dive for fish and prey on fingerlings, threatening the harvest of fishpond operators.

"Some fishpond operators put up nets to protect their cultured fish," said Marlyn Banda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau in Pangasinan.

But Esteban said the migratory birds preyed only on "weak fish" and pests in the fishponds.

Boon

For rice farmers, the migratory birds could be considered boon as these species eat snails, especially the golden ones that damage rice plants, Esteban said.

"While they come in droves, the migratory birds are not hunted down for their meat, because they have little flesh, which is not palatable," Banda said.

She said residents around the wetlands avoided catching the migratory birds for fear that they could catch the bird flu virus.

"These migratory birds are just better enjoyed from afar," Banda said. INQ



Pagbuwag sa Road Board, 1 pirma na lang

Pirma na lang ni Pangulong Duterte ang kulang para sa tuluyang pagbuwag sa Road Board.

Ito ay matapos pormal nang maisumite ng Presidential Legislative Liaison Office sa Malacañang ang mga dokumento na lalagdaan ng Pangulo.

Ang Road Board ang namamahala sa pondo mula sa Motor Vehicle User's Charge (MVUC), na

tinatawag ding road user's tax.

Nakalaan ang nasabing salapi para sa road maintenance at pagpapabuti ng road drainage, paglalagay ng traffic lights at road safety devices, kasama rin ang air pollution control.

Gayunman, sa imbestigasyon ng Commission on Audit (COA), nakitaan na nagkaroon umano ng maling paggamit ang Road Board

sa bahagi ng mahigit P166-bilyon nakolektang road user's tax simula 2001 hanggang May 2018.

Una nang hiniling noong 2017 ni Pangulong Duterte sa Kongreso na magpasa ng batas na bubuwag sa Road Board dahil ang bilyun-bilyong pisong road user's tax ay napupunta lang umano sa bulsa ng mga tiwaling opisyal.

Beth Camia



Editorial

Lagdaan, batas na nagbubuwag sa Road Board

NASA mesa na umano ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte ang House Bill 7436 na nag-a-abolished sa maanomalyang Road Board. Kapag hindi ito nilagdaan ng Presidente sa loob ng 30 araw, mawawalan ng saysay ang panukalang batas. Nararapat na lagdaan na ito sa lalong madaling panahon para magkabisa at tuluyan nang mabuwag ang graft-ridden Road Board.

Maraming motorista ang masisiyahan kapag nalagdaan na ang batas. Malulusaw na rin sa wakas ang ahensiyang kumukolekta sa motor vehicle user's charge (MVUC) na binabayaran ng motorista taun-taon kapag nagre-renew ng sasakyan. Umalingasaw ang corruption sa Road Board noon pang 2017 at nalanghap ito ng Presidente kaya nakiusap sa Kongreso na buwagin ito. Nakiisa ang Senado kaya naging mabilis ang pasya para sa paglusaw sa maanomalyang ahensiya. Ayon sa report, mula 2001

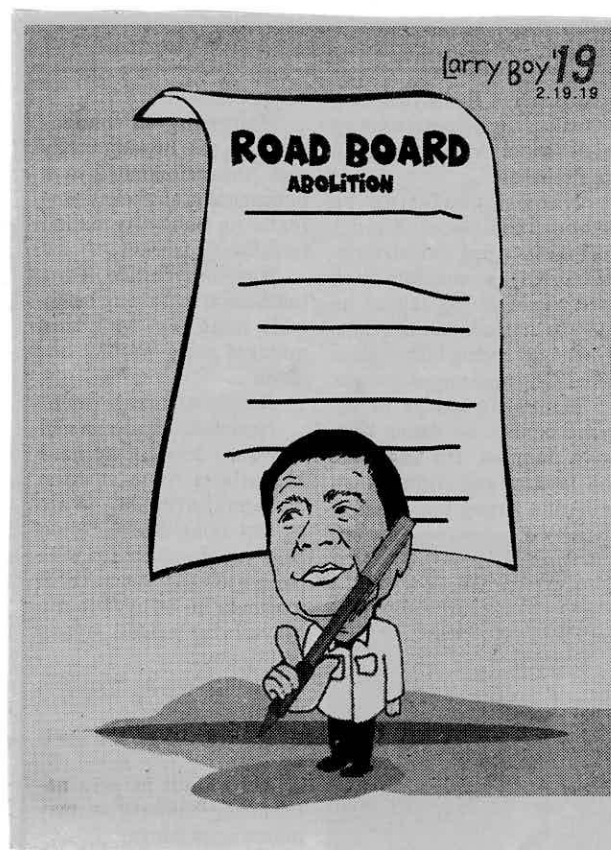
hanggang May 2018, ang total collection mula sa MVUC ay umabot na sa P166.18 bilyon.

Sa ilalim ng HB 7436, ang pondo na makukuha sa MVUC ay ire-remit sa National Treasury sa ilalim ng special account sa General Fund. Ang pondo ay eksklusibong gagamitin lamang sa pagpapagawa, pagre-repair, pag-a-upgrade at pag-rehabilitate ng mga kalsada, tulay at drainage system. Makakasama ang pondo sa taunang General Appropriations Act.

Hindi nagagamit nang maayos ang pondo sa ilalim ng Road Board kaya minabuti ng Presidente na lusa-win na ito. Noon pa, marami nang nababalita sa ahensiyang ito pero walang maglakas ng loob para halukayin ang katotohanan sa nalilikom na pondo.

Maraming motorista rin ang nagtatanong kung bakit sa kabila nang taun-taon na pagbabayad ng MVUC ay sira-sira pa rin ang mga kalsada at tulay. Bukod pa rito, marami rin ang walang sapat na signages o mga babala sa kalsada. Ang mga gilid ng bundok ay walang railings dahilan para mahulog ang mga pampasahero at pribadong sasakyan. Marami nang malalagim na pangyayari na ang pampasaherong bus ay nahuhulog sa bangin dahil sa kawalan ng barriers.

Lagdaan na ang HB 7436 para maimplement na ang mga pagbabago at mapondohan na ang pagpapagawa sa mga sirang kalsada, tulay, drainage at maski ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.





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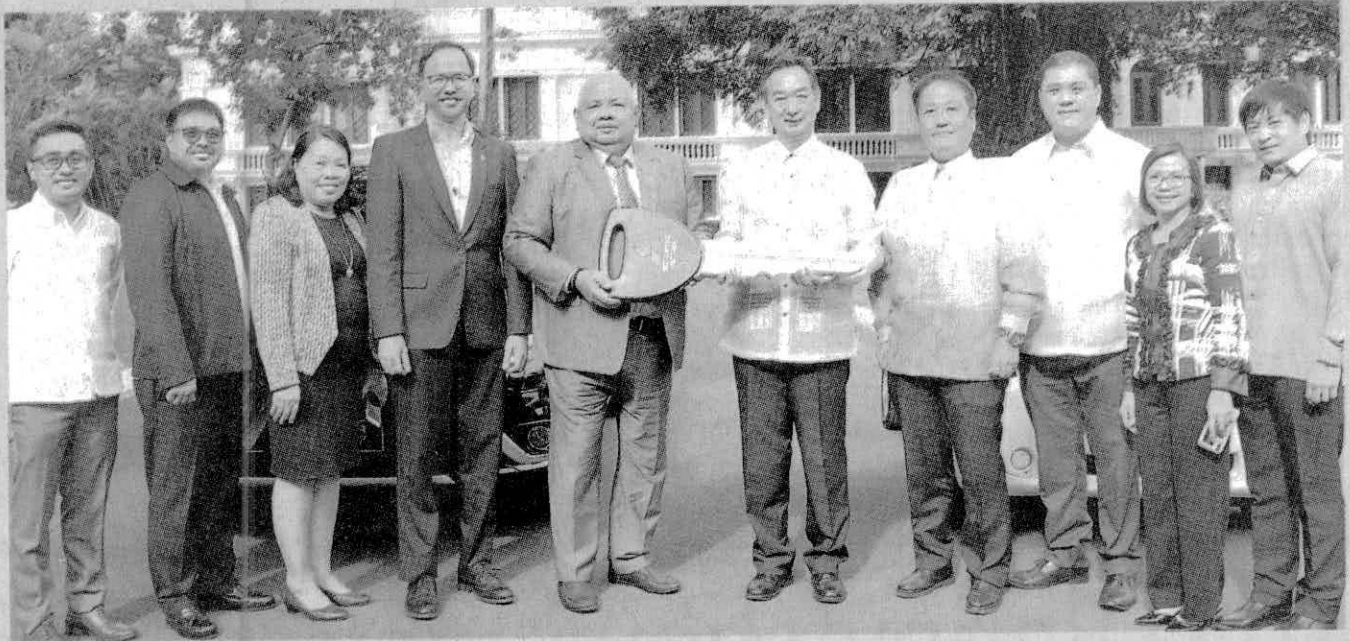
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■ (Left to right) Deputy Executive Secretary for General Administration McJill Bryant Fernandez, Malacañang Motorpool Director Edwin Sicat, Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration Rizalina Justol, Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Michael P. Ong, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. President and CEO Mutsuhiro Oshikiri, MMPC Senior Vice President for Corporate Division Yasuki Maruyama, DENR Assistant Secretary for Administration Jesus Enrico Moises Salazar, MMPC Assistant Vice President for Legal and Government Affairs lawyer Imelda Brown, and MMPC Vice President for Corporate Public Relations Renato Lampano attend the turnover ceremony of one i-MiEV (pure electric vehicle) and one Outlander PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) to the Office of the President.

President's office gets Mitsubishi EVs

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has turned over one i-MiEV (pure electric vehicle) and one Outlander PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) to the Office of the President during the signing and turn over ceremony held at the Malacañang Palace, with Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. (MMPC) standing as witness.

In remarks, DENR Assistant Secretary Jesus Enrico Moises Salazar thanked MMPC for being at the forefront in electric vehicle development and for being one of the private sector participants to promote the use of EVs and help the department in its vision to sustain a clean and healthy environment.

Praising MMPC's initiatives is Assistant Secretary Kelvin Lester Lee from the Office of the Executive Secretary. He said the vehicles will be a great addition to their motor pool and will be taken cared of. He also thanked DENR for making the ceremonial turn over possible.

Also in attendance was Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea who personally accepted the vehicles and was impressed with the capacity of the units.

MMPC President and Chief Executive Officer Mutsuhiro Oshikiri said in his speech: "As an EV and PHEV manufacturer, Mitsubishi Motors Corp. together with Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. are eager to work with the

Philippine government in its efforts of promoting efficient and environment-friendly vehicles."

"Our partnership provides a common direction as we work together with policy makers in coming up with a roadmap towards quick adoption of these next-generation vehicles in the country," he added.

MMPC is one of the country's leading automotive assemblers and distributors. It is the longest staying automotive company in the Philippines. Occupying a 23-hectare plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, MMPC's manufacturing plant has a maximum production capacity of 50,000 units. MMPC locally manufactures the Mirage and Mirage G4.



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Deadline of entry submission for Epson's film contest bared

EPSON, in partnership with DENR-EMB (Environmental Management Bureau) and GREENducation Philippines, is extending the submission period for its 1st EcoVision Short Film Competition to today (Feb. 19).

Open to all college students of any course or degree in NCR, Region III and IV-A, EcoVision's first edition is looking for the best Public Service Announcement (PSA) videos to help GREENducation Philippines, a youth-led group organized by DENR-EMB, in its campaign to educate Filipinos about various eco-friendly solutions that Filipinos can follow and apply in their daily lives.

To join, entrants must download, fill out, and submit the accomplished submission form along with attachments to ecovision@epc.epson.com.ph. With the theme "Green Solutions for Everyday Life at Home, School, or Office," the qualified entrants may submit PSA video materials with a minimum running time of two minutes to a maximum of five minutes until today, 11:59 p.m.



Maynilad inaugurates 22nd wastewater treatment facility

West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) recently inaugurated its P1.7-billion sewage treatment plant in Parañaque City, which is part of the company's long-term investment plan to improve the wastewater infrastructure and reduce pollution loading in Manila Bay. Joining Maynilad President and CEO Ramoncito S. Fernandez (sixth from left) during the inauguration of the water company's Parañaque Water Reclamation Facility were (L-R) MMDA Spokesperson Celine Pialago, JFE Engineering Corporation EVP Keiji Yoshida, MWSS Chief Regulator Atty. Patrick Ty, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Chief Representative Yoshio Wada, MWSS Administrator Reynaldo Velasco, MWSS Chairman Franklin Demonteverde, Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez, DENR Asst. Regional Director Gwendolyn Bambalan, DBP President and CEO Cecilia Borromeo, DMCI SVP David Villaviray, and Parañaque Representative Eric Olivarez.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Plastic na campaign materials bawal sa QC

NANAWAGAN ang EcoWaste Coalition sa mga kandidato sa nasyonal at lokal na posisyon na sundin ang ordinansa ng Quezon City kaugnay ng paggamit ng plastik sa pangangampanya.

Sa ilalim ng Sangguniang Panglungsod 2202 ipinagbabawal ang paggamit ng polyethylene plastic advertisement at propaganda materials sa lungsod.

“Full compliance will contribute to reducing the volume of plastic campaign litter polluting the environment,” ani Thony Dizon, chemical safety campaigner ng EcoWaste.

Ang mga lalabag ay pagmumultahin ng P3,000 hanggang P5,000 at tatlong araw na community service.

Kung kompanya ang gumamit ng ipinagbabawal na materyales ay

maaaring kanselahin ang business permit nito.

“While the prohibition is restricted to polyethylene plastic materials, we appeal to everyone to limit their use of polyvinyl plastic election tarpaulins as these may contain cadmium and other hazardous chemicals that pose risks to human health and the environment,” dagdag pa ni Dizon. —*Leifbilly Begas*



UN drive to cut mercury use in mining

THE Global Environment Facility (GEF) will finance a \$180-million program to help reduce the use of mercury in artisanal gold mining in eight countries worldwide, including the Philippines.

In a statement, the United Nations Environment Program (Unep) said the five-year program will be done in coordination with the governments of Burkina Faso, Colombia, Guyana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, the Philippines and Peru.

Unep said the program will also introduce and facilitate access to mercury-free extraction methods. The program will also work with governments to formalize the sector, promoting miners rights, safety and access to markets.

"By phasing out mercury use and connecting miners to markets for responsibly produced and sourced minerals, GEF GOLD will help to ensure the gold value chain both supports miners and provides consumers with access to ethically pro-

duced, environmentally sustainable gold," said Jacob Duer, head of the UN Environment Chemicals and Health branch.

"Promoting and facilitating access to non-mercury processing techniques for artisanal and small-scale miners is vital—not only to reduce mercury emissions but to protect the health of vulnerable communities."

Every year, over 2,700 tones of gold is mined around the world and 20 percent or over 500 tones annually is produced by artisanal and small-scale miners.

Unep said that as many as 15 million people work in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector globally, including 4.5 million women and over 600,000 children. These "miners operate on the edges of legality in many countries," as ASGM is banned or limited by legislation and licensing procedures.

The UN agency said these miners and processors, the majority of them in developing countries,

work in often harsh conditions, without the protection of industry regulations on pay, health or safety, to sate the global hunger for gold, for jewelry, investment and consumer products.

Unep said studies indicate that mercury exposure in artisanal and small-scale miners is a major, largely neglected global health problem. It places miners and their communities at risk of permanent brain damage, vision and hearing loss, and delayed childhood development.

"Mercury emissions impact health and ecosystems, contaminating the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. This is a long-term problem we need to confront now. Joint initiatives like GEF GOLD demonstrate that when we unite for environmental action, we can protect community health, provide livelihood to those most in need and save the planet," Joyce Msuya, acting executive director, UN Environment, said. *Cai U. Ordinario*