

# BALANGA’S NATURE PARK DECLARED ECOTOURISM ZONE

**MANILA** -- President Rodrigo Duterte has signed a law declaring the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park (BWNP) located in Barangay Tortugas, City of Balanga, Bataan as a community-based ecotourism zone.

A copy of Republic Act 11365 or "Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Responsible Ecotourism Act" which Duterte signed on August 8 was released to media on Wednesday (August 14).

"The State is mandated to promote a tourism industry that is ecologically sustainable, responsible, participative, culturally sensitive, economically viable and equitable for the local community. Towards this end, the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park (BWNP) is hereby declared a special ecotourism zone," the law

read. The law mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Tourism (DOT), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) to include BWNP in the priority development. A multisectoral Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council shall be established to be

chaired by the mayor of Balanga City. Under the law, the DENR and the DOT, in coordination with the DPWH, TIEZA, shall jointly assist the Balanga Wetland and Nature Park Development Council in the formulation of the ecotourism development and management plan for the BWNP that shall be complemented by a set of guidelines for a responsible, community-based ecotourism. The plan must include

a carrying capacity of the eco-park and its migratory birds; a specific site assessment; identification of strategic priorities; product development for local income generations; capacity-building for the local community; support for the formulation of local production groups and networks; marketing strategies that reflect the natural, social, and environmental integrity of the BWNP, among others. (PNA)

## PACC to gov’t workers: Learn when to accept, decline gifts

**MANILA** -- Government workers and officials should know whether to accept or decline gifts given as tokens of gratitude, the Presidential Anti-Corruption

Commission (PACC) said on Wednesday. PACC Commissioner Greco Belgica said he agreed with President Rodrigo Duterte and Malacañang that it was okay for government workers and officials to accept tokens of gratitude for the services they rendered, as long as they did not ask for it. "I will go by the proposal of the President. Sinabi niya naman po malinaw (He made it clear). Out of gratitude," Belgica said in a media interview.

Belgica explained that critics’ negative perception of government workers and officials receiving gifts should be changed because it was a normal custom among Filipinos. "Palagay ko medyo yung (I think the) interpretation ng batas na regalo (on the law about receiving gifts) really has to be changed dahil normal yung magpasalamat (because it’s normal to be grateful)," Belgica said. Belgica was referring to the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (RA 3019). "It’s not really the amount ang (that’s the) issue diyan (there), it’s the

purpose of a favor then that’s bribery," he added. However, Belgica said if a person giving the token of gratitude is someone who has pending transactions with government, it is best to decline the gift. "Kung yun nagbibigay ba sayo darating yung oras may transakyon sa gobyerno, hwag mo kunin dahil mako-comprise ka dun (If the person who gave you something has dealings with government, don’t accept it because you will be compromised)," Belgica said.

Earlier, Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said government workers and officials should use their discretion and only accept gifts that are of nominal value. "Eh kung yung nagbigay sa iyo ng regalo bilyonaro e baka naman kahit na para sayo malaki, hindi malaki sa kanya (If the person giving you a gift is a billionaire, if it’s a large amount for you, it might not be for him or her)," Panelo said. According to Panelo, the law does not specify what "nominal value" meant. (PNA)

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### Prayer for Healing

**JESUS**, may Your pure and healthy blood circulate in my ailing organism, and may Your pure and healthy body transform my weak body, and may a healthy and vigorous life throb within me, if it is truly Your holy will. Amen.

O BLOOD AND WATER WHICH FLOWED OUT FROM THE HEART OF JESUS AS A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY FOR US, I TRUST IN YOU!



*Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have Mercy on us and on the whole world. Amen.*

### 3 O’CLOCK PRAYER

“You died Jesus, but the source of life flowed out for souls and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world. O Fountain of Life immeasurable Divine Mercy, cover the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.”

“O Blood and Water which flowed out from the heart of Jesus as a Fountain of Mercy for us, I trust in you!”

“Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One have mercy on us and on the whole world.” (3x) Amen.

Jesus, King of Mercy, I trust in you!

## Army activating another brigade of rapid deployment force

**MANILA** -- After the activation of the 1st Brigade Combat Team (1BCT) last December, plans are afoot to create and activate the 2nd Brigade Combat Team (2BCT) to boost Philippine Army (PA)'s number of rapid deployable forces. This was bared by Col. Romulo Manuel, PA chief of plans, during an interview with reporters in Fort Bonifacio, Wednesday. The 2BCT along with the 1BCT are meant to address the need of the PA for forces that can be quickly committed for action, similar to such case as the 2013 Zamboanga City siege and the 2017 battle for Marawi City. "(2BCT) will be combined arms-capable, (in order) to enhance our territorial defense capabilities,"

Manuel said. A Philippine Army brigade is composed of three battalions -- 1,500 officers and enlisted personnel -- and in the case of the 1BCT and the soon to be activated 2nd BCT, its own armor, artillery, logistics and transport units, allowing it to move quickly. Initially, officers and other military personnel to form the 2BCT will be taken from existing PA units while the rest will be recruited. Depending on the security situation, the 2BCT, upon its activation, can be deployed in any place in the country but Manuel said that they are looking to base the unit somewhere in Northern Mindanao. Incidentally, the 1BCT was deployed to Sulu shortly after its activation. (PNA)

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