

Philippine development sparks 'sunset' protest

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Protesters flock to the water front to watch a cloudy sunset in Manila Bay on February 12, 2013. Hundreds of Filipinos converged on the Philippine capital's main bayfront Tuesday for a unique "sunset watch" protest aimed at stopping what they said would be a disastrous reclamation project.

Hundreds of Filipinos converged on the Philippine capital's main bayfront Tuesday for a unique "sunset watch" protest aimed at stopping what they said would be a disastrous reclamation project.

Armed with binoculars and cameras, the protesters called on the Manila

city government to repeal an ordinance granting permission for a developer to reclaim 288 hectares (711 acres) of the bay.

"This reclamation will not only block the view of the famed [sunset](#) on Manila Bay but will also lead to worsening [environmental degradation](#), like more floods," said Chiqui Mabanta, one of the organisers of the event.

The protest involved a broad coalition of Manila residents, artists, civic leaders and environmentalists called SOS Manila Bay, which last month filed a petition with city hall to stop the reclamation.

The protesters linked hands to form a human chain at sunset, while artists painted the famed views.

The group said the developer, Manila Goldcoast Development, had presented plans for an international cruise ship terminal to boost tourism to the area.

The complex would also house entertainment businesses, as well as a high-rise residential development.

The protesters argue the development would block vital drainage areas for the city, leading to heavier floods that already cause major damage every [rainy season](#).

It would also eliminate prime sunset viewing on Manila Bay, which is a popular pastime for many residents who consider the area an oasis amid widespread urban blight in a heavily polluted city.

Officials of the real estate company were not available for comment on Tuesday, although its chief executive was quoted in the local media last week as defending the environmental credentials of the project.

In 2005 Mabanta and other [conservationists](#) pressured the government into saving a 2.1-hectare (5.2-acre) forest park beside Manila city that was to have been felled for development.

"We hope to also win this battle to save Manila Bay," Mabanta said.

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