

# Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility

**A**cross the country, human activities have caused severe damage to the environment. Vast tracts of wetlands have been degraded, hectares of forests destroyed, and water bodies polluted.

The country is reeling from the devastating effects of the wanton abuse of the environment.

Floods, drought, and food shortages have become the order of the day, causing misery to thousands of people.

A key polluter of water bodies and agricultural land is polythene, a non-biodegradable material that is widely used for packaging goods and making bags used to carry goods purchased from shops and markets.

Most of these plastic bottles and polythene bags (*kaveera*), are used once and then discarded, with a vast quantity of it ending up in our water bodies and agricultural lands.

The plastic bottle and *kaveera* menace requires a concerted effort between the central government, private entities and the public to provide a lasting solution.

It is incumbent upon the authorities to promote the use of materials that are less harmful to the environment.

The use of paper bags to carry groceries should be encouraged, and the government should consider facilitating businesses to enable them to transition from packing for customers in *kaveera* to using paper bags.

Furthermore, in cases where *kaveera* bags and plastic bottles are used, the public should be encouraged to reuse them for other purposes to reduce the amount of plastic waste that is generated daily.

Currently some recycling of plastic bottles is conducted by a few factories in the country. The government should do more to provide a conducive condition to enable more entrepreneurs to invest in the plastic recycling business.

This will go a long way in lessening the plastic burden that the country is currently facing.

To facilitate the recycling of plastic waste, the public should be encouraged to separate plastic waste from biodegradable garbage.

To enable this, local governments should provide separate bins for plastic waste and biodegradable garbage.

The populace must also be cautioned against reckless disposal of waste and those who engage in the vice must be penalised.

Furthermore, we call upon the public to consider the conservation of wetlands and forests as a civic duty.

We are all victims of the negative consequences of wetland and forest degradation.

So we must cooperate with the government in its effort to restore degraded forests and wetlands and also contribute towards the protection of those that are still intact.

We commend the government's effort to restore degraded wetlands and forests, but we call upon it to ensure all encroachers are evicted without fear or favour.

## The Issue:

Environment conservation

## Our view:

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