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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



# DENR cites coastal program as key to achieve its targets

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

**D**epartment of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu highlighted the full and effective implementation of its Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) as instrumental in pushing the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) to achieve its targets in terms of managing coastal and marine resources nationwide.

CMEMP is a national program that aims to comprehensively manage, ad-

dress and effectively reduce the drivers and threats of degradation of the coastal and marine ecosystems in order to achieve and promote sustainability of ecosystem services, food security and climate change resiliency for the benefit of present and future generations.

Its primary objective is to achieve the effective management of coastal and marine ecosystems, thereby increasing the ability to provide ecological goods and services to improve the quality of life of the coastal population.

BMB's accomplishments mark the

beginning of greater protection for the country's coastal and marine environment, Cimatu pointed out.

"We will use these accomplishments as benchmarks for the in-

coming year for a better protection of our coasts and seas," the DENR chief said.

Through the CMEMP, BMB was able to assess and map out during the year 2,075.10 hectares of coastal ecosystems for potential livelihood opportunities exceeding its 2019 target of 1,700 hectares.

Likewise, the Bureau regularly maintained and protected all the 48 marine protected areas in the country under the

National Integrated Protected Areas System for a 100 percent accomplishment.

Six marine protected area networks were also established in Central Luzon, Bicol Region, Central Visayas, and Central Mindanao.

BMB also monitored and supported 64 existing biodiversity-friendly enterprises, and provided technical assistance to 69 local government units nationwide.



## **Panukalang batas para mabawasan ang pagsasayang ng pagkain inihain sa Senado**

**ISINUSULONG** sa Senado ang panukalang batas upang mabawasan ang pagsasayang ng sobrang pagkain.

Inihain ni Senador Lito Lapid ang Senate Bill 1242 o ang panukalang Zero Food Waste Act.

Sa ilalim ng panukala, magtatatag ng food banks para muling maipamahagi at mai-recycle ang mga sobrang pagkain sa mga nangangailangan.

Minamandato rin nito ang National Nutrition Council (NCC), sa pakikipagtulungan sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Social Welfare and Deve-

lopment (DSWD), Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Health (DOH), at iba pang concerned agencies at local government units na mag-sagawa ng National Zero Food Waste Campaign na maipaalam sa publiko ang consequence ng pagsasayang ng pagkain.

Una rito, naghain na rin si Senador Joel Villanueva ng panukalang 'Pagkain Para sa lahat' na layunin namang magtayo ng mga food banks at soup kitchen sa buong bansa upang malabanan ang kagutuman at malnutrisyon sa bansa.

**(Mylene Alfonso)**



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**TARGET NOT REACHED DESPITE TYPHOONS**

**ANGAT DAM WATER LEVEL STILL BELOW NORMAL**

**By Ronnel W. Domingo**  
@RonWDomingoINQ

The allocation of raw water from Angat Dam to Metro Manila and the provinces of Rizal and Cavite would remain below normal as the supply failed to reach the usual year-end target level for the first time since 2010 despite an up-trend due to recent typhoons.

"Allocation for MWSS (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System) remains at 40 cubic meters per second," said Sevillo David Jr., National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director.

David was referring to the supply of raw water from the dam which would be processed into potable water by Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc.

Although the normal allocation for the MWSS is 46 cms.

it has not been in effect since April after a supply crisis hit the east zone concession of Manila Water in March.

The NWRB hopes that every year-end, the water level at Angat Dam will be at least 212 meters above sea level, a target that has always been reached in the past eight years.

Thanks to recent typhoons like "Tisoy" and "Ursula," it has been rising daily this month although as of Dec. 28, it was pegged at only 200.96 masl—still short of the goal by over 11 meters.

According to David, the improvement in the dam's water level prompted the NWRB to raise the allocation for irrigation to 10 cms next month from 5 cms this month.

He said the supply for irrigation was doubled as part of efforts to help prepare farmlands for the dry cropping season.

"If the water level continues rising, we can hope for a slight improvement [in allocation] in January or February. But our priority is to manage the supply so that we will not have a repeat of what happened in March," David added.

Back then, thousands of faucets in households in the east zone went dry for days as Manila Water saw the water level at La Mesa Dam fall below critical level.

According to David, the last time the water stock at Angat Dam did not reach 212 masl at year-end was in 2010 due to a severe El Niño. Before that, the same thing happened in 1998.

Data from the NWRB showed that in 2010, the dam water level was only 203.3 masl. Just like now, the water allocation to the MWSS then was below normal, leading to rotational service interruptions. INQ



# KUNSABAGAY

NI TONY F. KATIGBAK

## Basura

NAPAKAHIRAP para sa atin ang magtapon ng ating mga basura sa tamang lagayan. Hindi na yata kayang tuldukan ang basura sa ating bansa. Ito ang isa sa pinakamahirap matupad kung isasama sa ating New Year's resolution.

Malaking hamon para sa mga sarili kung kaya pa bang ilagay sa ating listahan ang disiplina. Napakasimpleng kautusan pero nahihirapan tayong sundin.

Hindi pa ba sapat ang mga nararanasan nating pagbaha tuwing sasapit ang tag-ulan? Mga sakit na nakuha natin sanhi ng basura? Hindi ko naman nilalahat pero kung sino pa ang mga taong malapit sa peligro, sila pa ang balasubas sa pagtatapon ng kanilang mga dumi at basura kung saan-saan.

Kami ng aking asawa tuwing kumakain kami sa mga restaurant alam naming ligpitin ang aming pinagkainan upang pagkinuha ito ng mga waiter ay maayos na. Kahit sa aming basura hiwalay ang mga nabubulok sa hindi nabubulok, diyan man lamang ay makatulong ang aking pamilya sa ating kalikasan.

Mag-umpisa tayong disiplinahin ang ating mga sarili sa loob ng ating tahanan. Turuan ng tamang pag-uugali ang ating mga anak. Tingnan natin at hanggang sa kanilang pagtanda saan man sila magpunta ay dala-dala nila ang ating pangarap. Nitong nakaraang Pasko lamang binaboy na naman ang ating pambansang pasyalan.

Nakakarimarim tingnan ang mga iniwang basura ng mga nagdiwang ng Pasko sa Rizal Park. Sa rami ng mga basurahan na puwede namang pagtapunan, kung bakit ang makakating kamay ay kung saan-saan ihinahagis ang kanilang hawak na basura.

Sa darating na Bagong Taon alam nating lahat na mas marami ang darayo sa Luneta. Sana naman, magkaroon na tayo ng disiplina sa sarili nakatulong na tayo sa bayan at kalikasan.

Manigong Bagong Taon sa lahat!



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# Taal settlers live while danger lurks

By Jerry E. Esplanada  
Contributor

**T**aal, one of the world's smallest but deadliest active volcanoes, has claimed some 5,000 lives in the 33 times that it has erupted.

But the volcano's lethal history has not stopped migrants from other provinces from settling on the fringes of the volcano island, swelling its population from 5,500 in the early 1990s to more than 10,000, according to the Batangas Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (BPDRRMO).

"We have repeatedly warned volcano settlers that they're living with danger," said Renato Solidum Jr., head of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), as the 2,475-hectare island has been marked a "permanent danger zone," or PDZ, as early as the 1950s by Phivolcs' predecessor, the Commission on Volcanology.

A PDZ is "definitely not suitable for human settlement at all times because the risk of staying there is very high," said Solidum of Taal, one of the country's 23 active volcanoes which last erupted on Oct. 3, 1977.

Already, more than 4,850 earthquakes ranging from Intensity 1 to 3, as well as increases in gas emissions, have been recorded by Phivolcs in the volcano area.

## No police powers

"It makes perfect sense to prohibit outsiders from staying on the PDZ permanently," Solidum said. He added, however, that "with no police powers, the agency can't stop people from moving to the island. It's not our job. We can only recommend to higher authorities and local government units (LGUs) to keep the area off-limits to

permanent settlers."

Phivolcs personnel, he recalled, had earlier vacated the agency's observatory at Pira-Piraso Point [on the island] as a way of "telling the locals that Taal is really very dangerous," Solidum said.

As such, the volcano has become "one of the most instrumented not just in the region but in the world, with an array of seismic, ground monitoring and other instruments," constantly checking what's happening in both the island and the caldera, the crater created during a huge prehistoric eruption.

"We're also putting up infrasound, which is like a microphone to detect the rumbling sounds of Taal," Solidum said.

"Many volcano settlers seem fearless, with no sense of urgency, because they didn't know what happened in the past," he

said, referring to Taal's biggest recorded eruption in 1754, when the volcano vented its fury for over six months.

That eruption was "not only vertical, but also crossed sideways and went up the hill," Solidum said. The huge lava flow surged into Balayan Bay and transformed a channel into what became the 267-square-kilometer Taal Lake, submerging entire towns in its path.

## Hazard maps

Fearing that the 1754 eruption could happen again, Phivolcs has created worst-case scenario hazard maps based on the natural disaster.

Despite being a tourist attraction and a source of livelihood to settlers, Taal Volcano's PDZ should be declared "no man's land," said lawyer Kimberly Dyane Garcia, chief of the BPDRRMO

planning and research division.

Her office is pushing for the passage of one such Sangguniang Panlalawigan measure. This would require prior consultation with LGUs, as well as a huge budget for the relocation of island residents to safer areas in the province, Garcia said.

The BPDRRMO had earlier crafted a contingency plan covering not just disaster preparedness and risk reduction, but also the provision of emergency services and aid to evacuees in the event of Taal's eruption. The scenario will cover more than 74,000 families in nearly 200 villages in the lakeshore towns and cities within the 17-km radius from the volcano.

Already, three primary schools on the PDZ have transferred classes to the nearest schools in the lakeshore towns of Agoncillo, Balete and Talisay

based on a Department of Education-Batangas directive.

## Park site purposes

The volcano island was initially reserved for "park site purposes" based on Proclamation No. 235 issued by then President Ferdinand Marcos in 1967. But President Fidel Ramos amended the Marcos directive in 1996, allowing the park to "provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to tenured migrants without necessarily defacing the natural features of the area."

That became an irresistible lure to poor migrant families who started settling on the island, planting corn, cassava and other root crops on the rich volcanic soil, fishing and engaging in ecotourism activities, including renting out pumpboats and horses to tourists on their way to the crater's view decks.

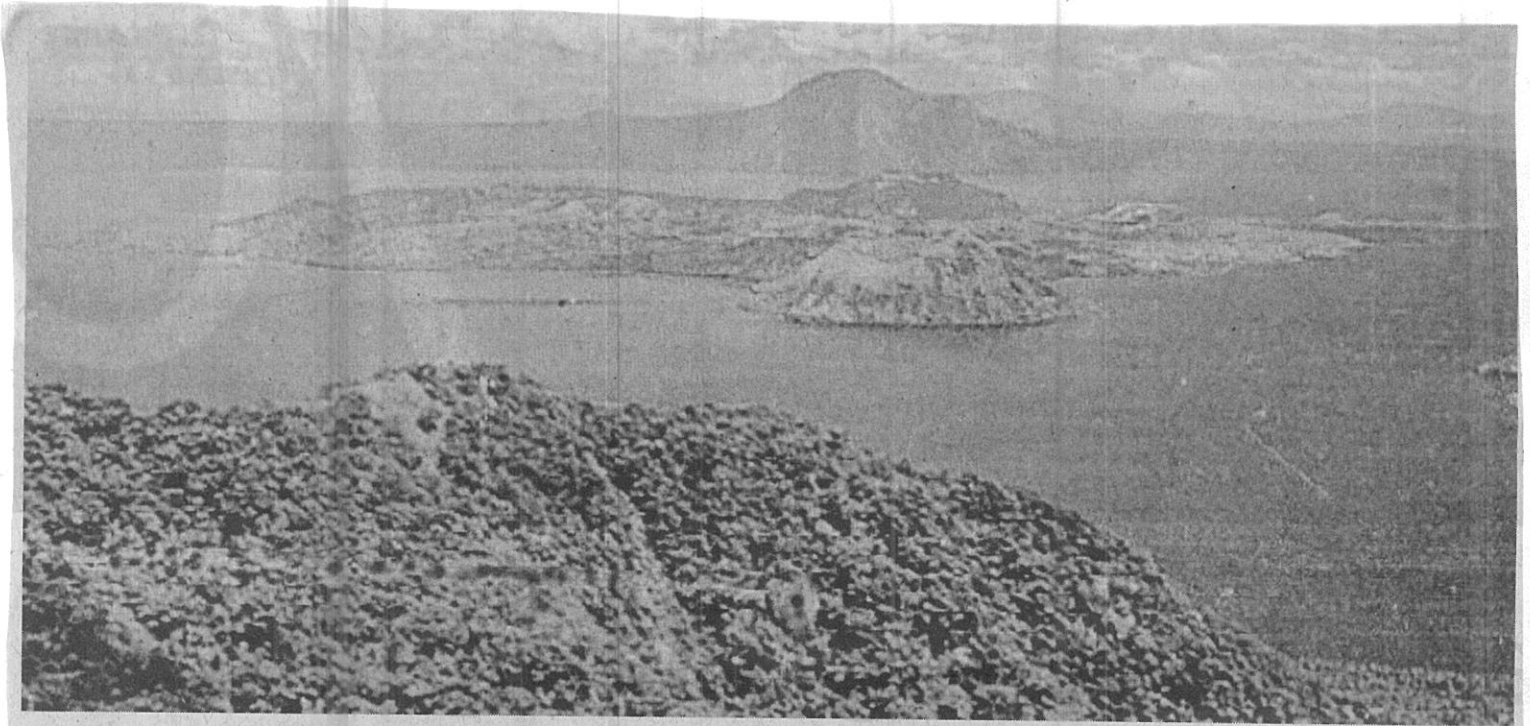


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## Taal settlers live while danger lurks



CONSTANT ALERT LEVEL Taal Volcano's lethal history has not stopped migrants from other provinces from settling on the fringes of the island. —PHILVOLCS PHOTO

The settlers have flourished despite there being no electricity on the island. Residents instead procure small generator sets and solar kits. For water, they turn to deep wells.

Said Emmanuel Onal, head teacher in the 218-pupil kindergarten and primary school in Alas-as: "We get the water at night. It's hot so it needs to be cooled down overnight so we can drink it in the morning."

### State of alertness

While the advantages of staying on the island outweigh the risks, Ona's coteacher Randal Cantos admitted that they are on a "constant state of alertness," with Alas-as village chief Jocelyn Bayanay citing "signs of imminent eruption," like an increase in the frequency of tremors and gas emissions, ground swelling, and deep rumblings known as "kurok."

Farmer Apolinario Tenorio, 60, said they "also watch for unusual behavior in dogs and horses when they sense danger."

People's fears have abated somewhat, what with today's cell phone technology and other gadgets providing constant, speedy and accurate updates from Philvolcs and other disaster agencies, said Bayani de Sagun, San Nicolas disaster risk reduction and management officer.

Like other active volcanoes worldwide that continue to attract thousands of visitors, Taal remains a centerpiece of tourism programs in Batangas province. But it is closed to local and foreign visitors when it is behaving abnormally and there is a threat of imminent eruption, said San Nicolas tourism officer Melanie Pili.

"What's important is that people know when to leave the island before an eruption," said Pili and cassava trader Alvin Pepito. **INQ**