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**DENR**

**IN THE NEWS**

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## Cimatu bats for culture change in welcoming New Year

**WELCOME the New Year without the pollution and danger from firecrackers and fireworks.**

This was the appeal of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to Filipinos as he batted for a fresh tradition of welcoming the New Year sans the use of firecrackers and fireworks.

"Let the culture change we seek to create in the Boracay and Manila Bay rehabilitations likewise give birth to a New Year celebration that is safe and environment-friendly," Cimatu said.

To make this possible, he said that the public must shun firecrackers and fireworks as these traditional ways of welcoming the change of the calendar cause pollution and pose serious safety and health risks.

"I believe that every single one of us can contribute in fighting air pollution by simply not using firecrackers and pyrotechnics that can cause immediate and extensive air pollution," he added.

According to Cimatu, the New Year's Eve celebration represents one of the most unusual atmospheric pollution events in the course of the year due to massive use of firecrackers and fireworks. Instead of using pyrotechnics and firecrackers, Cimatu urged the public to switch to eco-friendly alternatives to ring in 2020.

"There are some good alternatives to usher in the New Year with a bang, such as street parties, musical concerts, playing loud music, blowing horns and banging pots," he pointed out.

Cimatu's call for a fresh tradition in welcoming the New Year was consistent with his belief that culture change is necessary to improve and protect the environment.

He earlier noted that changing people's attitude and behavior towards the environment was the most difficult part in rehabilitating Manila Bay.

Aside from causing fire accidents, pyrotechnics and firecrackers contain harmful chemicals like lead, aluminum and cadmium, and leave metal particles, dangerous toxins and smoke in the air for hours or days.

Exposure to these is linked to negative health implications, such as coughing, wheezing, asthma attacks and even heart attacks, according to the Department of Health.

Records from the Bureau of Fire Protection showed that 14 fire incidents nationwide were reported in the evening of Dec. 31, 2018 up to Jan. 1. Majority of the fire incidents happened in residential areas and were caused by pyrotechnics and firecrackers.

**Cory Martinez**



# DENR beats waste management goals

**By Maria Romero**  
*@tribunephil\_mbr*

Through strict implementation of Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) surpassed most of its 2019 targets on solid waste management.

According to Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Unit Concerns Benny Antiporda, the agency surpassed its targets because it never failed to provide technical assistance to local government units (LGU) to ensure their compliance with the provisions of the law.

"We can say that the DENR has been doing its part insofar as RA 9003 is concerned. We are always

here to empower LGU, but we also expect them to enforce the law to the full extent," Antiporda said.

He attributed the agency's high accomplishment to the continuous monitoring and implementation of a comprehensive rehabilitation program for Manila Bay.

Under RA 9003, LGU are primarily responsible for the effective and efficient solid waste management, particularly garbage segregation and disposal.

Every LGU is required to develop a 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), including the establishment of materials recovery facilities (MRF) and sanitary landfills.

Antiporda emphasized that as early as October this year, the DENR already exceeded some of its targets on solid waste management.

He said the DENR – through the National Solid Waste Management Commission – has evaluated 605 SWMP, beating the 2019 target of only 528.

Antiporda said the agency approved 410 SWMP and monitored the implementation of 618 rehabilitation plans, accomplishing 103 percent and 128 percent of the annual targets of 400 and 482, respectively.

It also assessed a total of 340 open and controlled dumpsites. The environment chief earlier ordered the closure of all open and controlled dumpsites by 2022.

The DENR, with support from the regional offices of its Mines and Geosciences Bureau, had assessed 84 proposed sites of sanitary landfills nationwide, overshooting its target of 48 by 75 percent.



# Apela ng DENR sa publiko sa pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon

# WALANG PAPUTOK

UMAPELA kahapon ang Department Of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa publiko na iwasang gumamit ng paputok sa pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon.

**SUNDAN SA PAHINA 2**

*Mula sa pahina 1*  
Giit ni DENR Sec.

Roy Cimatu, ang mga tradisyunal na pag-

papaingay sa Bagong Taon ay nagdudulot ng

polusyon sa hangin at nagdudulot ng banta sa kalusugan.

Sa halip na gumamit ng pyrotechnics at firecrackers, hinimok ng DENR ang publiko na gumamit ng eco-friendly alternatives, tulad ng street parties, musical concerts, pagpapatugtog ng malakas at pagpapatunog ng busina.

Sa pagsalubong sa Bagong Taon, umaasa ang DENR na mahalagang magbago rin ang kultura at ugali ng mga Filipino upang maprotektahan ang kalikasan.





# Say no to firecrackers — prelates

## Welcome New Year safely and avoid polluting the environment

By LESLIE ANN G. AQUINO and CHRISTINA I. HERMOSO

**A**s the nation observes the time-tested New Year's Eve traditions, prelates called on everybody to stay safe and avoid polluting the environment by shunning the use of firecrackers during the revelry.

"I remind our people to join in not polluting our atmosphere by burning fireworks," Cubao Bishop Honesto

Ongtioco said.

Instead of firecrackers, he said Filipinos should use other things like basin or old cans to make noise.

Ongtioco said avoiding the use of firecrackers is also for their own safety.

"Many people get hurt because of these firecrackers," he said.

Tagbilaran Bishop Alberto ▶7

Uy also discouraged the use of firecrackers in welcoming the New Year.

"Let's have a clean and healthy Christmas and New Year by, saying no to firecrackers and fireworks," he said in a Facebook post.

Balanga Bishop Ruperto Santos has made it his yearly appeal to the faithful to use the money allotted for firecrackers to help the needy such as the victims of calamities.

"For this New Year to be safe, refrain from firecrackers or firing guns," he said.

"What we saved from firecrackers, let us save and share with those in need or the victims of calamities," added Santos.

The Balanga prelate said doing acts of kindness is the best way to welcome the New Year.

"Welcome our New Year with acts of kindness. Let us not make noises with firecrackers and gun firing," said Santos.

He added that doing good deeds "speaks louder" and lasts a life-

time.

It has been the tradition of Filipinos to welcome the New Year with firecrackers.

### New Year's Eve traditions

Meanwhile, the time-tested New Year's Eve traditions that will be observed around the country tonight are intended to invite good fortune, good health, and prosperity well as to ward off bad luck and negative energies for the brand new year.

In many homes, a basket of 12 circular fruits will form part of the center piece on dining tables for prosperity in each of the twelve months of the year 2020. Many will also be eating 12 round fruits while wearing red or clothes with polka dots or anything that has circles on it for good fortune. Some will throw coins or shake coins inside metal containers and fill their pockets with coins while walking around the house for improved finances in the coming year. Lights will be turned on in every corner of the house. Coins will be placed on staircases,

inside pockets, windows, and doors, which will be flung open at the onset of the New Year – all in the spirit of attracting good fortune and more blessings.

Children will also be made to jump in the belief that this will help them grow taller. New Year resolutions are also traditionally listed down.

Families will gather for the traditional Media Noche or midnight meal, a feast that, like the Noche Buena on Christmas Eve, symbolizes hopes for closer family ties as well as for a prosperous new year ahead. This tradition is also held in thanksgiving for the blessings of the year gone by. Many celebrate the last day of the year with mixed emotions – joy and reflection – hearts filled with hope for the brand new year.

Catholic churches traditionally celebrate New Year's Eve masses between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to protect churchgoers from the danger posed by firecrackers. In Rome, Italy, Pope Francis is scheduled to preside over the First Vespers and the "Te Deum" mass of thanksgiving at 5 p.m. at the Saint Peter's Basilica.



# FIRECRACKERS ARE DANGEROUS TO CATS AND DOGS

**ANIMAL welfare and environmental protection groups called on revelers to shun firecrackers and fireworks as these are not only harmful to human beings but also to animals with highly developed sense of hearing such as cats and dogs.**

In a joint press statement, the Philippine

Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and the EcoWaste Coalition jointly appealed to the public to keep the New Year's Eve festivities safe and less stressful for cats and dogs.

"The loud bangs, booms, crackling noises and whistles from firecrackers and fireworks are distressing for cats and dogs who are gifted with

highly sensitive hearing," said Anna Cabrera, Executive Director, PAWS, adding that "the thunderous sounds and flashing lights, especially on the days and hours leading to the New Year, provide no entertainment to our furry friends who are terrified and threatened by the noisy and warlike festivities."

"With no safe space to go, the Asong Pinoys (aspins) and Pusang Pinoys (puspins) on the streets are more scared and traumatized when firecrackers are directly thrown at them by uncaring individuals who derive pleasure in seeing them run away in fear," she said, pointing out that such cruelty to animals is punishable by law.

"If we stop using firecrackers, humans and animals would both be better off - as we do not add to the air and noise pollution - and we focus on other peaceful, more productive and less harmful ways to usher in the new year," she emphasized.

"Celebrating with family and friends without firecrackers is possible - if we care for the welfare of our furry friends," she said, further pointing out "when we see how much our pets suffer from severe anxiety and fear from the firecracker blasts, one

would understand why majority of pet owners would want a total ban on the use of firecrackers in our country."

Thony Dizon, Chemical Safety Campaigner of the EcoWaste Coalition, called attention to "the air pollution from the ignition of firecrackers and fireworks that may cause disorientation, appetite loss and upset stomach among exposed cats and dogs."

"The ingestion of firecrackers and fireworks and their fragments and residues, which are loaded with hazardous substances, may also cause chemical poisoning in cats and dogs," he warned.

According to Pet Poison Helpline, pets can develop gastrointestinal problems like vomiting, painful abdomen, and bloody diarrhea when firecrackers or fireworks are ingested, the severity of which will depend on the type and amount of firecrackers or fireworks ingested.

To promote a safe and less stressful New Year's celebrations for cats and dogs, including aspins and puspins, PAWS and the EcoWaste Coalition urged animal-loving Filipinos to heed the following advice:

1. Sway members of your household and your neighborhood not to light firecrackers and fireworks.

2. Exercise pets in

the morning so they will be fired by night time and hopefully, resting or fast asleep by the time the New Year's revelry begins.

3. Keep pets inside during firecracker explosions or fireworks displays, but do not chain or tie them.

4. Provide a safe and secure space where pets can stay during the noisy revelry; close the windows and put the curtains down to block out the noise and any abrupt bursts of light.

5. Play soothing music or turn up the radio or TV to drown out the deafening bangs from firecrackers and fireworks.

6. Put a calming wrap or anxiety vest on pets to make them feel protected and secure.

7. Ensure pet's access to drinking water, and make your pet pee or poo before the revelry starts.

8. Escape-proof your home to prevent pets from going outside during the festivities.

9. Do not drive stray cats and dogs away, give them food and water, and let them stay at least for the night.

10. To avoid choking, strangulation and poisoning incidents, keep shopping bags, cleaning solutions, tobacco products, alcoholic drinks, chocolate, fruit cake, and nuts out of pet's reach.



**MATYAGANG** nakatayo ang isang miyembro ng Salvation Army na si Jun Astrera habang naghihintay ng magkakaloob ng donasyon sa isang mall sa Ortigas. Ang malilikom dito ay gagamitin para sa mga biktima ng kalamidad sa buong mundo.



## From undersecretaries to directors, Cimatú orders reshuffle of key DENR executives

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA  
@jonlmayuga

**S**TARTING next year, both officials and employees of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will be working under a new environment following Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatú's issuance of special orders (SO) reshuffling key executives of the department.

The reshuffle is expected to affect undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and director-level officials who were also given new offices, or services, to supervise.

In an SO dated November 22, 2019, Cimatú has assigned undersecretaries to be "in charge" of certain offices, or services, in the DENR.

Undersecretary Rodolfo C. Garcia is the new chief of staff, and field operations undersecretary for Visayas and Mindanao, and is in charge of the Forest Management Bureau (FMB), the agency which implements the Enhanced National Greening Program.

Environment Undersecretary Ernesto D. Adobo Jr.'s assignments are administration, finance, human resources and information system. He has been assigned as the supervising undersecretary of the Land Management Bureau.

Environment Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones has been assigned to legal, policy, planning and international affairs, and is now the supervising officer of the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau (ERDB).

Environment Undersecretary Analiza R. Teh retains her assignment as undersecretary for climate change and mining concerns. In addition to being the supervising officer for the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Teh is the new supervising officer of the Environmental Management Bureau.

Environment Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna has an additional assignment on priority programs on top of being the undersecretary for field operations for Luzon.

Environment Undersecretary Jim O. Sampulna has been assigned to enforcement and Muslim affairs, and was named as supervising officer for task forces, including Environment Protection and Enforcement Task Force, and TF Tayo ang Kalikasan.

Environment Undersecretary Sherwin Rigor is assigned to the DENR's attached agencies.

Environment Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda retains his assignment as undersecretary for solid-waste management and local government unit (LGU) concerns, as well as designation as supervising officer for the National Solid Waste Management Commission.

In a separate SO dated December 2, 2019, most assistant secretaries of the DENR were also given new assignments.

Environment Assistant Secretary Corazon Davis is assigned to policy, planning, foreign-assisted and special projects; Environment Assistant Secretary Marcial C. Amaro Jr. is assigned to field operation-Visayas; Environment Assistant Secretary Michelle Angelica D. Go is assigned to legal and legislative affairs, and supervising the legal and legislative liaison offices.

Environment Assistant Secretary Joan A. Lagunda is assigned to administration and human resources, and is the supervising officer of the human resource development service and administrative service; Environment Assistant Secretary Nonita S. Caguioa has been assigned to finance, information system and mining concerns; Environment Assistant Secretary Daniel Nicer is assigned to enforcement;

Environment Assistant Secretary Joselin Marcus E. Fragada to field operations; Environment Officer in Charge Assistant Secretary Ricardo L. Calderon, climate change; Environment OIC Assistant Secretary Ruth M. Tawantawan is assigned to field operations-Eastern Mindanao and concurrent regional executive director of DENR Region 11; Environment OIC Assistant Secretary Gilbert C. Gonzales is assigned to field operations-Southern Luzon and concurrent regional executive director, DENR Region 4A; Environment OIC Assistant Secretary Metodio U. Turbella is assigned to field operations-Western Mindanao.

DENR Director IV Jesus Enrico Moises B. Salazar, in an SO dated December 10, was designated as assistant secretary for LGU concerns.

In another SO, Calderon's designation was amended, assigning him as OIC assistant secretary for climate change and concurrent director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau, while Lagunda's new assignment, or designation, is assistant secretary for administration, human resources and legislative affairs.

Cimatú, in another SO dated December 10, 2019, named former ERDB Director Sofio B. Quintana as director for internal audit service, while DENR Director Roland R. Castro is assigned as director of administrative service. Last, DENR Director Angelito V. Fontanilla was assigned as director, foreign-assisted and special projects service.

In an interview, Antiporda, the deputy spokesman of Cimatú, said the "reshuffle," which caused the demotion of several officials, only aims to give chance to others.

With the new assignments, he said, the DENR chief is hoping for a more "aggressive" performance next year.



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
INITIATIVES  
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**INCOURAGE**

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**NEW WATER SOURCE**

**KALIWA DAM PROJECT GETS  
PRESIDENT'S GO-SIGNAL**

President Duterte has given the go-signal to the China-funded New Centennial Water Source Kaliwa Dam in Quezon province as a "last resort" for Metro Manila's dwindling water supply.

The President also assured the indigenous peoples in Rizal and Quezon who will be affected by the project that he would pay for their relocation.

"This endless ... This water. I can give you a little bit of an elbow room to move. Those who

are living there, they are, of course, they are all natives. They are trying to delay the project by ... And we need water," he said in a speech in Digos City, Davao del Sur, on Monday afternoon.

He went on: "Manila without Wawa and Kaliwa Dam, this will be the last resort to have water for Manila. I will order them to go ahead and we will pay the natives and we will relocate them."

—JULIE M. AURELIO INQ





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# Rody pushes 2 dams for MM, warns courts

By ALEXIS ROMERO

A "desperate" President Duterte yesterday ordered the completion of two projects designed to ensure enough water supply in Metro Manila and nearby areas, saying indigenous people would have to be relocated and no court could stop it.

Duterte said the China-funded Kaliwa Dam and the Razon-led Wawa Dam would be Metro Manila's "last resort to have water."

"The people living there, they are, of course, they are all natives. They are trying to delay the project... And we need water. Manila without Wawa and Kaliwa Dam, this will be the last resort to have water for Manila," the President said during his visit to Digos City, Davao del Sur yesterday.

"I will order them to go ahead and we will pay the natives and we will relocate them. But for the courts to issue (temporary restraining orders or TROs), I said, do not take it to the point that I would say, 'Ignore them,'" he said, describing himself as "desperate" to find relief for the problem.

He threatened to send owners of the Metro Manila water concessionaires to jail for syndicated estafa, saying their deals smacked of corruption.

The P12.2-billion Kaliwa Dam to be constructed in Quezon province is one of the government projects funded by Chinese loans.

Meanwhile, the P20-billion Wawa Dam to be built in Rizal is a joint venture between Prime Infra of businessman Enrique Razon and San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders Group.

Duterte claimed losing bidders have been using TROs to delay projects and to extort money from winning bidders.

"Do not believe in the courts because it's all about money... The losing bidder will file a case. A TRO will then be issued and the projects will be delayed, only to realize that the losing bidder only wants some money from the winning bidder," the President said.

"I'm warning the judges - be sparing about issuing TRO; otherwise, I will publicly announce do not follow (your decision). You follow the program of the government," he added.

Not all judges are using

court decisions to earn money, according to Duterte, but he claimed that the problem has stalled the delivery of basic services.

"If you give the judge money, he would issue a TRO and you delay the projects and that is why we are caught in a bind, whether we would be able to deliver water in the coming years," the President said.

"That is why this shenanigan in the Philippines is part of the graft and corruption. It's money," he added.

Judges should be able to justify the TROs they would issue, according to the Chief Executive; otherwise, he would force them to eat the paper containing the decision.

"I will go to him, tell him to read the TRO. If it's really a work of the legal mind then, maybe... If not, I will ask him to eat the TRO," he said.

## 'Issue of corruption'

Duterte yesterday also threatened to send owners of water concessionaires to jail, saying the controversy involving their deals with the government is "an issue of corruption."



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# Duterte OKs Kaliwa Dam project

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

“Go ahead.”

President Duterte has given the go-signal to start the construction of the China-funded New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam, saying

the structure would be the last resort for Metro Manila to have water.

In a speech in Digos City, Davao del Sur, President Duterte assured to pay and relocate indigenous peoples who will be affected by the project which will be constructed along Rizal

and Quezon provinces.

“I can give you a little bit of an elbow room to move. Itong mga nakatira doon (Those who are living there), they are, of course, they are all natives. They are trying to delay the project by... And we ▶7

need water,” he said Monday.

“This will be the last resort to have water for Manila. I will order them to go ahead and we will pay the natives and we will relocate them,” he added.

Duterte last expressed support for the project in October this year, citing the water crisis that hit Metro Manila this year. He, however, insisted that the project should have safeguards.

In an interview, Duterte said while people have the right to protest, he would rather that people have water following complaints that the project will destroy the environment.

“So kayong concern ninyo, local governments ganoon, it will pollute. I will just say to the, kung sinong mag-ano (So if your concern is it will pollute. I will just say that whoever’s in charge), you just place the safeguards,” he added.

“It might create some danger or damage but that is not my concern. My concern is the welfare. Ganito ‘yan, the greatest good for the greatest number. That is democracy,” he added.

The Kaliwa Dam project in Tanay, Rizal is facing opposition from environmental groups and local officials, saying it would displace Indigenous Peoples and adversely affect the environment.

Earlier, Malacañang said the government can still rescind its contract with China for the New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam Project if it would be proven that the project is disadvantageous for the country.

The Commission on Audit (COA) has also questioned the selection of the contractor for the Kaliwa Dam project, saying the results of its bidding was in the “guise of being a competitive procurement process.”



Rody pushes 2 dams for MM, warns courts

The President said the owners of Manila Water and Maynilad should be arrested for syndicated estafa over concession deals that he claimed are disadvantageous to the public.

"I will really have you arrested. Believe me. I want to see a billionaire in jail. Son of a b\*\*\*\*. Do not give me b\*\*\*\*s\*\*\*. I will order the military to take over your water," he said during his visit to earthquake survivors yesterday in M'lang, North Cotabato.

"To those asking, 'Where's the big fish? Where are those involved in corruption? Where are the big ones?' I will deliver to you now Ayala and Pangilinan," he added, apparently referring to Manila Water chairman of the board Fernando Zobel de Ayala and Maynilad chairman of the board Manuel Pangilinan.

"Pag nagkamali 'yang...gagong yan, ipakukulong ko talaga sila. Kita mo maski anong insulto ko hindi - hindi na sumasagot. Sigurado, swak sila (If they commit a mistake, those fools, I will send them to jail. They have not responded to my insults. I'm sure they are liable)," the President said.

Duterte has accused the two Metro Manila water concessionaires of using their concession deals to "milk" Filipino consumers by the billions.

The Chief Executive said the contracts prevent the government from blocking rate hikes and permit concessionaires to collect damages for losses that stem from regulatory actions.

He added that the government officials behind the contracts should also be charged with economic sabotage, plunder and graft.

"This issue of the Ayalas and Pangilinan, all billionaires, is an issue of corruption and you fooled the people. Your son of a b\*\*\*\* contracts, nobody saw them. It was negotiated during the time of (former president Ferdinand) Marcos, continued (during) the time of (former president Gloria) Arroyo, who allowed it to be extended. They wanted to extend it under my watch, I said, no," Duterte said.

The water concession deals, however, were signed during

the time of former president Fidel Ramos, not Marcos.

"I will expropriate it. Maghin-tay kayo kung may pera ako pam-bayad. Kung wala, pasensya kayo (Wait until I determine whether I have money to pay for it. If I have none, sorry)," Duterte said.

Duterte claimed the owners of water concessionaires acted as if they owned the water they are distributing.

"They are just water distributors. But as it turned out,

they are the richest and they think they are the owners of water. That's why in the contracts they are the only (ones) allowed to implement increase," he said.

"We surrendered (our) sovereignty on that. In the contracts, water is just a commodity. It is not a part of the... natural resource of the country, which is really a crooked way of interpreting a Constitution," he added.



# Du30 backs construction of Kaliwa, Wawa dams

By MJ Blancaflor and Maricel V. Cruz

**P**RESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte on Monday expressed his approval to the construction of the China-funded Kaliwa Dam and the Razon-led Wawa Dam, saying the structures would be the “last resort” to stabilize water supply in Metro Manila.

“This will be the last resort to have water for Manila. I will order them to go ahead,” Duterte said in a speech.

The President assured the public that those who would be affected by the controversial project would be paid and relocated.

The dam projects in Rizal and Quezon were seen to affect at least 56 indigenous people households and will place around 284 tribal households at risk of flooding, according to the Environment Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

In his speech, Duterte blamed the indigenous communities and restraining orders from the courts for supposedly “delaying” the projects.

“Those who live there are, of course, they are all natives. They’re trying to delay the project and we need water for Manila,” he said.

Duterte last expressed support for the project in October, citing the water crisis that left dry faucets in Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, a militant lawmaker has urged President Rodrigo Duterte to get tough on what he claimed as abusive players in the power sector in the same manner he did against water concessionaires.

Deputy Minority Leader and Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate claimed that so-called onerous contracts—similar to what earned the President’s ire in connection with billionaire-owned water firms—are also being pushed by some power

stakeholders.

“For the sake of consistency, President Duterte should be as tough on these power oligarchs as he was to these water concessionaires,” Zarate said, referring to Manila Water and Maynilad.

“They are also pushing for onerous contracts that will no doubt burden consumers,” added Zarate, who for years have warned the public on the disadvantageous nature of some proposed power supply agreements for the construction of several coal-fired power plants.

These power contracts are still pending before the Energy Regulatory Commission.

Zarate said President Duterte should also look into the power industry where “monopolies are also holding consumers hostage.”

“The constant threat of thinning power supply and brown outs in exchange for higher power rates or more onerous power supply agreements has been the bane of consumers for decades now,” Zarate said, reiterating an appeal to Malacañang in April 2019. During that month, the Luzon grid was placed under red alert status several times, leading to rotating brownouts in some areas.



## Kaliwa, Wawa dam tuloy kahit may TRO – Duterte

Muling nagbabala si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa mga hukom na huwag mag-iisyu ng temporary restraining order (TRO) sa mga mahahalagang programa ng gobyerno.

Inihayag ito ng Pangulo sa kanyang pagdalo sa isang aktibidad sa Digos City, Davao del Sur nitong Lunes kung saan binanggit nito ang isyu ng tubig sa Metro Manila.

Sinabi ng Pangulo na batid niya ang naantalang pagpapatayo ng Wawa at Kaliwa dam project dahil sa pagtutol ng mga residen-

teng maaapektuhan nito. Hindi aniya malayong gamitan ng mga tumututol ng TRO ang proyekto para hindi matuloy ito kaya binalaan ng Pangulo ang mga hukom na huwag mag-iisyu nito.

"Im warning the judges that be sparing about issuing TRO. Otherwise I will publicly announce that do not follow. You follow the program of government. 'Yung TRO is just... ginagamit. Pera-pera lang 'yan eh. Not all, in fairness to other judges," anang Pangulo.

Nagbanta ang Pangulo na ipakakain niya ang

TRO ng hukom kapag hindi makatuwiran ang rason sa pag-iisyu nito.

"Itong kalokohan ng Pilipinas, part of the graft and corruption 'yan. It's money. Money-money lang 'yan. Pag nag-isyu ng TRO ang gagong judge, I will go to him tapos sabihin ko basahin mo 'yang TRO mo. If it is really a work of a legal mind then maybe, pag hindi ipakain ko 'yang TRO mo. We have to do something about it," sabi pa ng Pangulo.

Binigyang-diin nito na kailangan ng Metro Manila ang tubig kaya

hindi maaaring maantala ang nabanggit na mga proyekto.

Tiniyak din ng Pangulo na babayaran ng gobyerno ang mga maaapektuhang residente at ililipat ang mga ito sa ibang lugar.

"They are trying to delay the project and we need water. Manila without Wawa and Kaliwa dam, this will be the last resort to have water for Manila. I will order them to go ahead, and we will pay the natives and we will relocate them," dagdag ng Pangulo. **(Aileen Taliping)**



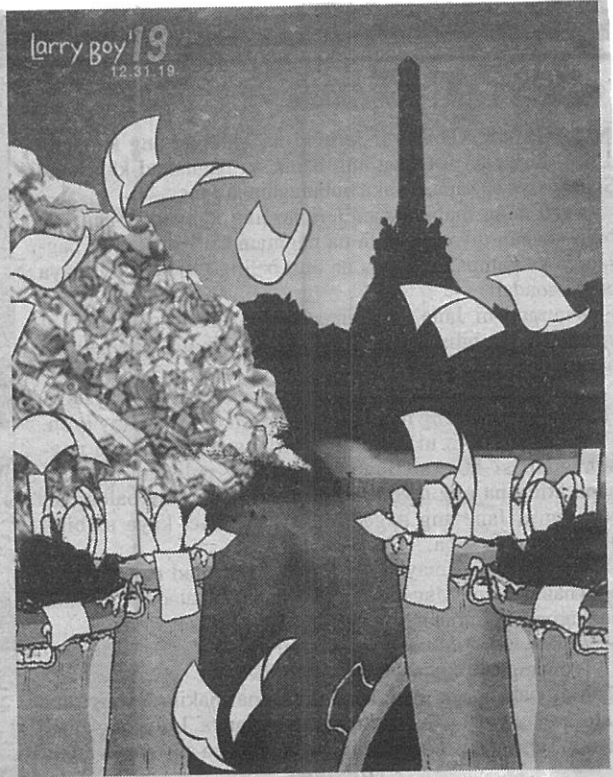
Editorial

## Halina sa Luneta at nagkalat ng basura

**M**ARAMING tao ang nagseselebreyt ng Pasko at Bagong Taon sa Luneta. Doon nila ginagawa ang tradisyunal na noche buena at media noche. Nagdadala sila nang maraming pagkain at doon nagsasalu-salo. Masaya sila habang pinagdiriwang ang Pasko at Bagong Taon.

Pero ang matindi, pagkatapos ng masayang salu-salo, gabundok na basura ang kanilang iniwan kinabukasan. Ginawa nilang basurahan ang parke. Kahit paulit-ulit ang paalala na huwag iiwan ang kanilang basura, marami pa rin ang hindi sumusunod at patuloy na nag-iiwan ng basura. Kahit na mayroong mga basurahan sa paligid, hindi ginagamit at mas gusto pang iiwan sa damuhan, upuan at mga ilalim ng puno at halaman.

Noong Disyembre 26, umabot 60 tonelada ng



basura ang nakolekta sa Luneta. Iba't ibang klase ng basura na karamihan ay mga plastic at styro na hindi natutunaw. May mga wrapper ng litson, sachet ng 3-in-1 coffee, aluminum foil na pinagbalutan ng embutido at bangus, tray ng leche flan, cup ng instant noodles at plastic bags na pinaglagyan ng kung anu-anong baon na pagkain.

Taun-taon ay ganito ang tanawin sa Luneta -- dagat ng basura. Pinipilit pagandahin ang parke para maging kaaya-aya pero dinudumihan lamang ng mga irresponsableng namamasyal kapag Pasko at Bagong Taon. Wala na silang pakaialam kung ang iniwang basura ay maging dahilan nang pagbabara sa mga drainage at iba pang daanan ng tubig na nagiging sanhi ng pagbaha. Ang mga plastic na basura ay hindi natutunaw kaya walang katapusan ang pagbaha.

Ngayong bisperas ng Bagong Taon, tiyak na namang marami ang daragsa sa Luneta para salubungin ang 2020. At gaya nang dati, magdadala na naman sila ng mga pagkain at ang pinagkainan at pinagbalutan ay doon na naman iiwan. Tonelada na namang basura ang kukolektahin.

Magkaroon ng disiplina ang mga nagseselebreyt sa Luneta. Huwag ikalat at iiwan ang basura. Magdala ng sariling garbage bag at doon ilagay ang mga basura. Pangalagaan ang kalinisan ng parke para mapanatili ang kagandahan nito. Huwag sirain ang nag-iisang pasyalan na laan sa publiko. Huwag magkalat ng basura sa Luneta.



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PLANT A TREE, SEE A TARSIER IN SOUTH COTABATO

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RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

PLANT A TREE, SEE A TARSIER IN SOUTH COTABATO

KORONADAL CITY—Tourists wanting to see a tarsier at a sanctuary on the slopes of Mt. Matutum will be asked to plant a tree during their visit to help ensure the protection and survival of one of the world's smallest primates.

Starting Christmas Day, walk-in visitors were also no longer allowed inside the tarsier sanctuary at Barangay Linan in Tupi town, South Cotabato province, according to a policy issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through the Protected Area Management Office of Mt. Matutum Protected Landscape (MMPL).

**Seedlings provided**

Those who wish to see the tarsier will have to coordinate with the MMPL staff to secure visiting schedules, said Mila Calungsod Locsin, administrative chief of South Cotabato's Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office. The 13,947-hectare MMPL straddles the towns of Tupi, Tampakan and Polomolok in South Cotabato and Malungon town in Sarangani province.

Locsin said the Tupi Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (Menro) would provide seedlings to visitors. She said the local government, through its "voluntourism" program (coined from volunteerism and tourism), was hoping to encourage volunteerism by allowing visitors to plant trees to help preserve the sanctuary.

Forester Gabriel Baute, protected area superintendent, said visitors needed to attend a briefing on the do's and don'ts in the sanctuary to avoid disturbing the tarsiers in their natural habitat.

"Tarsiers are nocturnal animals, like owls. Hence, they sleep during the day and are active only during the night. That's why visitors are asked to avoid disturbing these animals when visiting the sanctuary," Baute said.

Just like other wildlife, tarsiers are best left in their natural habitat than being captured or caged as pets, he said.

Tarsiers are known to commit suicide when in captivity (they bang their heads on cages) or when exposed to stress-

ors like camera flashes, human touch and other forms of disturbance, he said.

**'Near threatened'**

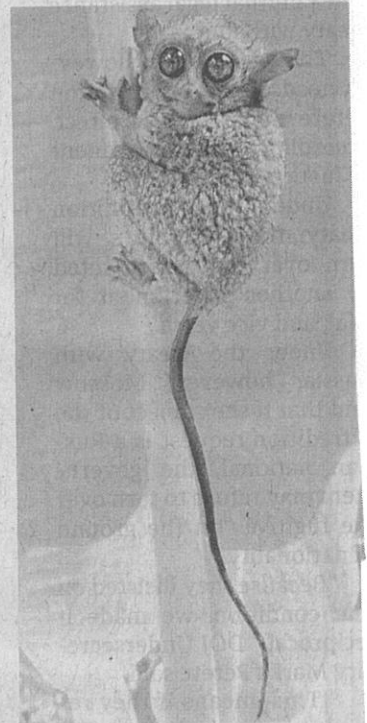
According to Rolando Visaya, Menro chief, individuals with high regard for the protection and conservation of the country's biodiversity, especially the tarsier, are most welcome in the sanctuary.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the tarsier among the "near threatened species," because of the destruction of their known habitats. The IUCN described its population trend as decreasing.

Former President Fidel Ramos signed Proclamation No. 1030 on June 23, 1997, declaring the Philippine tarsier (*Tarsius syrichta*) as a specially protected faunal species.

The proclamation mandated the establishment of appropriate sanctuaries to preserve and protect the tarsier, which is found on the islands of Bohol, Samar, Leyte and Mindanao.

—EDWIN O. FERNANDEZ INQ



**DO NOT DISTURB** Visitors at a tarsier sanctuary on the slopes of Mt. Matutum in South Cotabato are encouraged to avoid disturbing the small nocturnal primates.

—PHOTO COURTESY OF DENR REGION 12



# DOE lifts suspension on Semirara Mining

By MYRNA M. VELASCO

The Department of Energy (DOE) has finally lifted the suspension order on the Consunji-owned Semirara Mining and Power Corp. allowing the resumption of the company's coal mining operation, which was suspended only in November this year.

The company said it received the order lifting the suspension verdict last December 26. The DOE decision also gave the company the go-signal to recommence operations.

The energy department, nevertheless, qualified that SMPC cannot do mining operations yet "in the area adjacent of the former Casay Lake until such time that all liquefiable materials in the area have been removed."

In lifting the suspension order, the DOE stipulated that the Consunji firm "substantially complied with all the conditions of its directive," as specified in the DOE's order on November 14, 2019.

The block covering the suspended mining operations had been under SMPC's coal operating contract number 5. At that time, the DOE ordered the company's stoppage

of operations due to "mudflow incident" at the Semirara Island last October.

Following the issuance of the suspension order, several conditions had been imposed by the energy department – and compliance to such shall serve as its basis on allowing the company's resumption of operations. Primarily, SMPC was required to "address the existing and continuing apparent risk in the Casay Lake area near and adjacent to the operations of the Molave pit."

The Consunji firm had been further instructed to conduct "geo-hazard assessment of the Casay Lake area," and was similarly required to carry out "specific plan to remove the hazard." Such, it was noted, shall be subject to the evaluation and approval of the DOE.

SMPC had been further ordered to "conduct a comprehensive review of health and safety program which must include: Management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, program evaluation, and improvement and coordination and communication."





## The year the world woke up to the climate emergency

**PARIS (AFP) - Schoolchildren skipping class to strike, protests bringing city centres to a standstill: armed with dire warnings from scientists, people around the world dragged the climate emergency into the mainstream in 2019.**

Spurred on by Swedish wunderkind Greta Thunberg — virtually unknown outside of her homeland a year ago but now a global star nominated for a Nobel prize — millions of young people took part in weekly demonstrations demanding climate action.

And, like harbingers of the apocalypse, the Extinction Rebellion movement embarked on a campaign of peaceful civil disobedience that spread worldwide, armed with little more than superglue and the nihilistic motto: "When

hope dies, action begins."

Although scientists have warned for decades about the risk to humanity and Earth posed by unfettered burning of fossil fuels, in 2019 — set to be the second hottest year in history — their message seems to have finally hit home.

The 2015 Paris agreement saw nations commit to limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels as a way of curbing the worst impacts of global warming.

A safer cap of 1.5C was included as a goal for nations to work towards.

With Earth having already warmed by 1C, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) dropped a bombshell late last year.

Its landmark report in

October 2018 laid the groundwork for the string of climate shockwaves that rumbled throughout 2019: The world is way off course for 1.5C, and the difference between 1.5C and 2C could be catastrophic.

"The message from scientists was that each half-degree counts," said Amy Dahan, a science historian specialising in climate at France's National Centre for Scientific Research.

It was a message heard around the world.

For Corinne Le Quere, president of France's High Commission for Climate Change and member of Britain's Committee on Climate Change, 2019 was "something new".

"I've worked on climate change for 30 years and for 29 of those, as scientists, we've worked unnoticed," she told AFP.