


# Report by Ranjana Mukhopadhyaya

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When my good friend from Taiwan persuaded me to join her in a trip to the scenic volcanic mountain ranges in Tagaytay, Philippines, did I know that it would turn out to be such an adventurous and eventful day where I would get to witness volcanic eruptions  first hand !! We reached the area near Taal lake around 12 noon, had lunch and took pictures of the Taal volcano located in the center of Taal lake.



Our guide told us that the last volcanic eruption was in 1911. Did we know that on 12th January 2020 this volcano would re-erupt again in front of us!! It was past 1 pm and all was quiet, green and picturesque in the volcano area. Then we moved to another viewing point located opposite to Taal volcano when we noticed small smoking coming out of the crater....



It was past 2 pm and the skies that was clear till then was gradually turning grey. As we stood watching the volume of smoke from the crater grew bigger, thicker and darker. Soon it started raining and then the severity of the situation struck us. It was black rain carrying the ashes of the volcanic eruption and had a strong acidic stench...smelling like sulphuric acid. Our clothes, face and hands had volcanic ashes all over it.



As we rushed towards our vehicle, we saw it was also covered by volcanic ashes. Some of my adventurous friends wanted to go to the Starbucks in front of the volcano to shoot some iconic photos. However, frantic call from our conference organizers made us head back to Manila. But it was not an easy drive as the windscreen was getting covered by the volcanic ashes. The driver used all the water bottles that we had with us for cleaning up the windscreen. It was wonderful to see volunteers pouring buckets of water on the passing cars.



On the way we were told that the danger level has been raised to 3 which means that the residents near the volcano areas have to evacuate. The road to Manila was completely jammed. We had left about 4 pm and by the time we reached our hotel in Manila it was past 9 pm....5 hours of drive!!! The danger level had been raised to 4. The volcanic ashes had reached till Manila and people are wearing masks.



BRWLLA



Taal Volcano

LIVE: Quezon City



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