

Indonesia's Merapi volcano ejects towering column of ash

June 1 2018



In this Friday, June 1, 2018, file photo, residents watch as Mount Merapi erupts in Cangkringan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The country's most volatile volcano shot a towering plume of ash about 6 kilometers (4 miles) high Friday in an eruption authorities said lasted two minutes. (AP Photo/Slamet Riyadi, File)

Indonesia's Mount Merapi erupted twice on Friday, shooting ash plumes as high as 6 kilometers (4 miles) in the sky and forcing the closure of two airports.

The National Disaster Mitigation Agency said the volcano's alert status, raised last month from the lowest level, was unchanged and a 3-kilometer (1.8-mile) no-go zone around the crater remains in force.

It said the first eruption occurred at 8:20 a.m. and lasted two minutes. Merapi erupted again in the evening, spewing volcanic ash as high as 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles), the local volcanology agency said.

Materials unleashed by the first eruption were blown northward, forcing the temporary closure of Ahmad Yani International airport in the Central Java capital of Semarang and Ade Sumarno Airport in Solo, officials said.

The mountain is about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Yogyakarta city on the densely populated island of Java.

About a quarter million people live within a 10-kilometer (6-mile) radius of the volcano.

Merapi's last major eruption in 2010 killed 347 people.

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 250 million people, sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Government seismologists monitor more than 120 active volcanoes.



Mount Merapi shoots volcanic ash as seen from Cangkringan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Friday, June 1, 2018. The country's most volatile volcano shot a towering plume of ash about 6 kilometers (4 miles) high Friday in an eruption authorities said lasted two minutes. (AP Photo/Slamet Riyadi)

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