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Volcano in Russia's Far East Spews Huge Ash Plume Into Atmosphere

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Kamchatka's Klyuchevskaya volcano. **Volcanological Station of Kamchatka**

A volcano in Far East Russia's Kamchatka region has begun spewing large amounts of ash and lava, destroying roadways and forcing schools and kindergartens in surrounding areas to close, Russian media reported Wednesday.

The Klyuchevskaya volcano, one of the world's most active volcanoes, began erupting in late June, although experts said at the time that it did not pose any threat to the nearby population.

However, on Wednesday, Klyuchevskaya started releasing an ash column some 14 kilometers into the atmosphere, prompting authorities to issue an aviation "code red" alert and shut down schools in towns located near the volcano.

In the village of Klyuchi, located some 30 kilometers from the volcano's crater, residents received warnings of a possible ashfall.

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Similarly, local officials warned that mobile communications and internet connection could be disrupted by the eruption, adding that they were taking “all measures to eliminate the consequences as quickly as possible.”

A high amount of activity is not unusual for the Klyuchevskaya volcano, which has erupted several dozen times since 1700.

However, experts are unsure as to whether the latest eruption will soon dissipate or intensify further, with some saying the volcano could continue to release ash and lava for several more months.

Russia's far-flung Kamchatka Peninsula is home to more than 300 volcanos, including 29 that are active.

In April, the nearby Shiveluch volcano spewed massive plumes of ash across large swaths of the region, disrupting air traffic and blanketing a nearby village with a thick layer of ash.

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