Beat: Miscellaneous

Volcano erupts on New Zealand's North Island, no injuries

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USPA News - A volcano on the North Island of New Zealand erupted without warning on Wednesday afternoon, sending a massive plume of dark ash into the sky, authorities said. Scientists believe another eruption could take place during the next few weeks.

The eruption at Mount Tongariro, which is located at Tongariro National Park, about 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of Wellington, took place at 1:25 p.m. local time on Wednesday and lasted for less than 5 minutes. Local earthquake activity continued for about 15 minutes, after which no notable activity was recorded. "We didn`t hear anything but could suddenly see an ominous dark grey cloud of ash drifting towards us," said Nico Fournier, a staff member of GNS Science, who witnessed the eruption from a few kilometers (miles) away. The eruption did not result in any directed rock blasts or debris. Dark ash, which indicates the eruption was caused by magma pressure deep underground, reached a height of 3 to 4 kilometers (1.8 to 2.4 miles) and briefly led to airspace being closed above the volcano. A light dusting of ash fell across part of State Highway 46 and northeast towards Turangi, leading to some road closures as a precaution. Wednesday`s small eruption follows a much larger, gas-driven eruption at Mount Tongariro on August 6, which was the first such event at the volcano in more than 100 years. The last eruption prior to August began in November 1896 and lasted nearly a year until October 1897. GNS Science said the latest eruption took place without any warning signs, underscoring the unpredictable nature of volcanoes. "We cannot say what will happen next at Tongariro but the scenario considered most likely [..] is that we could expect another eruption of similar size at any time during the next few weeks," the agency said, adding that future eruptions are not expected to be larger.

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