

# *Volcano Erupts Near Nuclear Plant in Southern Japan*

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Tokyo, February 5 (RHC)-- A volcano has erupted explosively not far from a nuclear plant in southern Japan, sending fountains of lava into the sky.

Japan's Meteorological Agency said the Sakurajima volcano in Kagoshima Prefecture on the southernmost island of Kyushu erupted on Friday around 7 p.m. (1000 GMT). Witnesses said the eruption sent an orange burst into the darkening sky and lava rolling down the mountain's slope.

Meanwhile, television footage showed dramatic images of the fiery spectacle and dark gray smoke billowing up into the sky.

Sources say the latest eruption happened about 50 km (30 miles) from the Sendai nuclear plant.

The plant had been shut down, along with all of Japan's other nuclear plants, after a 2011 earthquake and tsunami and an ensuing nuclear disaster. Japan has resumed using nuclear energy four and a half years after the disaster at the country's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and amid stiff criticism.

The Japanese government says it has since ushered in stricter safety regulations to avoid a repeat of the Fukushima crisis.

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