Mayon volcano erupts in the Philippines – Alert Level 3; thousands evacuated

International · 5 November 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/05



News

Mayon volcano in Albay province, the Philippines, had a 'moderately explosive' eruption lasting about 6 minutes at 11:53 a.m. local time on Friday, 30 Oct 2026; the ash plume rose about 3,000 m above the crater. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) raised the alert from Level 2 to Level 3 the same day (the highest is 5). By that evening 746 families (2,041 people) had been evacuated from Tabaco City, Camalig and Ligao City; entry into the 6-km Permanent Danger Zone (PDZ) was barred.

Key facts

Location	Albay province, Bicol region, Luzon island, Philippines
Eruption	30 Oct 2026, 11:53 a.m.; about 6 minutes; plume 3,000 m
Alert	Level 2 → 3 (scale 0–5) – PHIVOLCS
Evacuation	746 families / 2,041 people (evening of 30 Oct; Albay disaster office)
Danger zone	6-km Permanent Danger Zone – entry barred
Earlier in 2026	6 Jan – Level 3 (lava-dome collapse); another eruption with evacuations in May

Background

- Geography: Mayon is a 'stratovolcano' (composite volcano) famous for its almost perfect cone – built of alternating layers of lava and ash; its viscous magma makes it explosive. Japan's Fuji and Italy's Vesuvius are of the same type. By contrast, Hawaii's Mauna Loa is a 'shield volcano' – fluid basaltic lava and gentle slopes.
- Pacific Ring of Fire: a horseshoe-shaped belt around the Pacific Ocean with about 75% of the world's active volcanoes and about 90% of its earthquakes. Cause – oceanic plates sinking beneath other plates at convergent boundaries (subduction). The Philippines lies on its western rim.
- History: Mayon's 1814 eruption buried the Cagsawa church – its ruins are now a tourist site. Luzon's Mount Pinatubo produced one of the 20th century's largest eruptions in June 1991; sulphur dioxide spread in the stratosphere temporarily cooled global temperatures by about 0.5°C.
- Science: a 'lahar' is a mudflow of water, rock debris and ash rushing down a volcano's slopes (an Indonesian word); common on Mayon in the rainy season. A 'pyroclastic flow' is a fast-moving current of very hot gas, ash and rock. PHIVOLCS works under the Philippines' Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Tamil Nadu link: there is no direct Tamil Nadu link; Tamil Nadu has no volcanoes. But subduction-zone disasters have hit the State – in the tsunami raised by the Sumatra–Andaman subduction earthquake of 26 Dec 2004, Nagapattinam was the worst-affected district on the Tamil Nadu coast.

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