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MONITOREO VOLCÁNICO

PORTAL DEL ATLAS NACIONAL DE RIESGOS

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May 12 10:00 h (May 12, 15:00 GMT)

The increase in the general activity of Popocatepetl volcano during the last weeks and especially the acceleration of the seismic activity registered yesterday, today at 01:40 am, the Interior Ministry raised the Volcanic Alert Level to Yellow Phase 3. During the period in which the volcanic traffic light remains in this level, two bulletins will be issued daily: the first at 10:00 am, with a summary of the activity of the last 24 h and the second at 07:00 pm, featuring updating the data reported in the first. If necessary, the updates will be reported more frequently.

During the last 24 h, the monitoring system of Popocatepetl volcano registered a long episode of harmonic tremor of high amplitude, beginning yesterday at 16:00 h (local time) until 05:45 h (local time) of this early morning (see image 1). This activity was accompanied by the emission of a continuous steam and gas plume, containing small to moderate amounts of ash, which was released in denser pulses (see image 2). The emission of incandescent fragments was also observed sporadically, which mainly fell in to the crater interior. However, at 01:10 h, some part of these fragments fell on the highest part of the volcano north-northeast flanks, at maximum distance of 300 m (see imagen 3), (seeimagen 4). The tremor was registered in several stages of 1 to 2 hours of duration, continuously or in segments. Each stage began with an explosion of moderate intensity. The most important occurred at 17:00 h (local time) and was perceived by much of the villages close to the east and southeast flanks of the volcano.

From 05:45 h to 07:26 h the harmonic tremor decreased in amplitude and was registered in segments, which gradually spaced themselves. At 07:27 h (see image 5) and at 08:10 h, two other exhalations with explosive component were recorded and were followed by new segments of harmonic tremor of high amplitude, between 08:39 h and 08:58 h.

Additionally, during the last 24 h the monitoring system registered 60 exhalations of low to moderate intensity, accompanied by the emission of a steam and gas plume, and possibly by small to moderate amounts of ash; although it was not possible to observe this clearly.

Yesterday afternoon and evening, the visibility to the volcano was reduced because the presence of mist. During the night, associated to the tremor episode, moderate to intense incandescence could be observed over the crater (see image 6), as well as the emission of a continuous plume, reaching 1 km high, with denser pulses containing small amounts of ash. From this morning to the time of this report, the steam and gas plume was observed thinner, reaching 900 m high and travelling to the northeast (see image 7).

The volcanic alert level is in YELLOW Phase 3.

In past years, the type of activity reported was associated to the ascent of magmatic material and the growth of the lava dome. This activity leads to the following likely scenarios: intermediate to high scale explosive activity, dome growth and possible lava emission; explosions of growing intensity, occurrence of pyroclastic flows, and notorious ash fall on the closer villages and in lesser amounts in the more remote places, depending on the wind direction.

CENAPRED places particular emphasis in the following recommendations:

1. Access is restricted in a radius of 12 km from the crater. For this reason the permanence in this area is not allowed.
2. The road between Santiago Xalitzintla (Puebla) and San Pedro Nexapa (Mexico State), including Paso de Cortes, is open only to controlled traffic.
3. To the authorities of Civil Protection, to maintain preventive procedures, according to operative plans.

4. To the population, to be aware of the official information emitted.

Popocatepetl volcano is monitored continuously 24 hours a day. Any significant change in the activity of the volcano will be notified promptly.

May 12 02:40 h (Mayo 12, 07:40 GMT)

In the past two weeks the activity of Popocatepetl volcano has increased. Today an increase in the general levels of activity was noticed, in particular some explosions, volcanotectonic seisms, tremor episodes and exhalation trains, so based on the recomendatio of the Scientific Assesing Comitee, the Interior Ministry decided to increase the Volcanic Alert Level to Yellow, Phase 3.

This alert level implies the posibilidad of the following scenarios:

Explosive activity of medium to high scale, growth of the lava dome and possible expulsion of lava, increasing intensity of the explosions, noticeable ashfalls in nearby towns and lesser ashfalls in population centers farther away, depending on the wind direction.

Special emphasis is placed on the following recomendations:

1. Continue with the security perimeter of 12 km from the crater, access to that area is forbidden.
2. Maintain traffic control on the road between Santiago Xalitizintla and San Pedro Nexapa through Paso de Cortés.
3. To the Civil Protection authorities, to maintain their preventive procedures, according to their operational plans.
4. To the population, to be alert to official information.

The volcano monitoring is maintained 24 hours a day. Any significant change in the activity will be notified promptly.

See images May 12, 2013

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