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Fresh blast rocks south Japan volcano

A violent blast from Shinmoedake, a volcano erupting in Kyushu, Japan, has broken windows 8km (five miles) away.

Buildings were showered with glass and the volcano threw out huge clouds of ash and gas. Hundreds of people have already fled their homes.

It was the most dramatic bang so far from the peak on Mount Kirishima, the location of the 1967 James Bond movie *You Only Live Twice*.

Volcanologists have warned of more large blasts and possible lava flows.

Since the volcano showed signs of life last Wednesday, the government has widened the exclusion zone to a 4km (2.4 mile) radius from the peak.

It is the first major activity at Shinmoedake in 52 years.

The latest bang could be heard more than 7km (4.3 miles) away, Japan's NHK television reported.

"I heard the bang then felt the boom, which was like wind pressure," one unidentified resident told reporters.

Volcanic debris, including hot ash and rocks, was sent more than 2,000m (6,500ft) into the air; fine ash clouds have continued to rain down on the area.

No serious injuries have been reported, although an elderly woman was cut by flying glass. Hundreds of windows were smashed by the blast, officials said.

Domestic flights in and out of Miyazaki - about 950km (590 miles) south-west of Tokyo - were grounded last week.

Train services and schools have also been affected.

Volcanologists said that a dome of lava was growing larger inside the volcano's crater but it remained uncertain whether it would spill over the mountain's rim.

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