

Meteorological Dept to conduct cloud seeding

BEATING THE HEAT: Dept waiting for National Security Council's cue

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TO make up for the lack of rain and the dry season, the Meteorological Department will resort to cloud seeding operations for cooler weather.

The department would wait for the cue from the National Security Council, which would put forward requests for cloud seeding operations, said its commercial and corporate services division director, Dr Mohd Hisham Mohd Anip.

The department is, however, uncertain of the number of operations it would carry out as it depends on the condition of the atmosphere and suitability of clouds.

"What we are facing now is the southwest monsoon season and its atmosphere is not suitable due to its stability, and we have to find the right clouds.

"Even if we do it, the success rate will not be high. However, if we are asked by the council to do so, we will proceed," he said yesterday.

With the hot and dry season, haze is expected to make a comeback.

Satellite observations, he said, revealed very small numbers and isolated hotspots of forest fires from neighbouring countries.

"In July and August, we expect an increase in hotspots and we will be hit by haze. It is normal for Malaysia to be affected by the haze due to smoke from forest fires, but we cannot determine if it happens naturally or otherwise due to the dry and hot weather."

"This problem does not only stem from other countries, but also activities of our own. People should refrain from open burning."

Hisham described the weather situation as normal every year, as it occurred from the end of May to early September.

The maximum temperature during this season will be between 33°C and 35°C, slightly higher compared with the normal 32°C.

"It won't be as bad as last year, when the highest temperature recorded was 38°C."

There would be lesser rainfall during this period, about 100mm to 150mm, except for the north of the peninsula and west Sabah.

In **Johor Baru**, the dry spell has taken a toll on many people, especially children.

Aside from having to gradually shield themselves with bags or fanning themselves with notebooks, schoolchildren are doing anything to stay cool.

When the *New Straits Times* observed the end of the school day in the afternoon, many school children either brought along an umbrella or wore headscarves to shield themselves from the scorching sun.

State Health and Environment Committee chairman Datuk Ayub Rahmat has issued an advisory to Johoreans to be wary of their health and keep themselves hydrated during the dry spell.

"If possible, stay indoors. Avoid being outdoors too much as this could cause heatstroke. Drink lots of water, while Muslims who are fasting should drink lots of water during *sahur*," he said.

In **Seremban**, Syarikat Air Negri Sembilan director Wan Rasdi Wan Ismail yesterday said all dams, except the Gemencheh Dam, were at normal levels.

"Although the Gemencheh Dam recorded below critical level, we will be able to supply water from the Sawah Raja water treatment plant to the affected areas, Gemencheh and Rembau district through the newly installed 900mm pipeline.

"Besides, we only extract two million gallons of raw water from the Gemencheh Dam now instead of eight million gallons. This will slowly recover the dam's water level."



WATER CRISIS