

22 SEP 1997

Haze-Sarawak

API LEVEL IN SARAWAK BREACHES 600 MARK

KUCHING, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- The Air Pollutant Index (API) in Sarawak where a state of haze emergency has been declared since Friday, breached the 600 hazardous mark again at noon today.

The effort to create artificial rain since Saturday afternoon did not appear to have any significant effect on the weather as the visibility hampered the cloud seeding attempt.

The team from the Meteorological Services Department and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) whose aircraft are being used in the operation could not locate the exact position of the cumulus cloud for seeding.

A spokesman of the Department of Environment (DOE) here said the API had risen to 604 by mid-day, from 591 at 11am and 473 at 1am.

The API had taken a turn for the worst when it started to rise steadily from 346 at noon yesterday.

On Friday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad declared a state of haze emergency in Sarawak when the API breached the hazardous level of 301-500 for the first time at the 646 mark.

Meanwhile a Meteorological Services Department spokesman here said visibility was reduced to 300 metres in Kuching and Bintulu and 100 metres in Sibu, Miri and Sri Aman.

Below are the hourly air pollutant index and visibility reading in Sarawak up to noon today.

Air Pollutant Index (API):

Time/Reading

1am - 473

2am - 485

3am - 497

4am - 511

5am - 526

6am - 541

7am - 526

8am - 560

9am - 569

10am - 579

11am - 591

12 noon - 604

(Source: Sarawak Department of Environment)

(0-50 - good, 51-100 - moderate, 101-200 - unhealthy, 201-300 - very unhealthy, 301-500 hazardous)

Visibility :

At 9am

Kuching - 300 metres

Sibu - 100 metres

Miri - 100 metres

Bintulu -300 metre

Sri Aman - 100 metres

(Source: Sarawak Meteorological Department) -- BERNAMA

cj+opp JK