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Law-Haze

CLOUD-SEEDING TO CLEAR THE HAZE IN THE KLANG VALLEY

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- The Meteorological Department will conduct cloud-seeding for a week from Sunday to clear the haze in the Klang Valley, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said today.

Law said a private chartered aircraft company had been engaged for the task to create rain to clear the haze over the area.

He told reporters here that the decision to implement cloud-seeding was made following a directive by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that it should be carried out in areas facing drought and haze.

Asked if cloud-seeding would be carried out in Sarawak, Law said the department had decided to try it out in the Klang Valley first as the aircraft used could only carry out the process around the area.

Law said the department would try to carry it out in other affected states, depending on the situation, costs and availability of aircraft.

He said the company engaged to conduct the task has the right type of aircraft as well as the required equipment.

Initially, he said, the department approached the Royal Malaysian Air Force but its aircraft do not have the equipment needed.

"It needs to install the equipment and this will take too much time, so we thought it would not be practical," he said.

On the success rate of cloud-seeding, he said records based in Pulau Pinang and Kedah where the process is carried out annually show a high percentage of success.

Law also said the ministry has not received any news from Indonesia where burning forests in Sumatra and Kalimantan had somewhat been linked to the current haze situation in the country.

"However, our Meteorological Department staff are always in touch with them," he said.

He said that the department and the Department of Environment have reported that yesterday's air quality index throughout the country showed a moderate level.

On logging and land-clearing activity in Kelantan, Law said a date would be set to brief the state government on the matter as directed by the cabinet.

"After the briefing, we hope the state government would pay serious attention on this matter," he said.

According to a newspaper report today, activities of logging and land-clearing in Lojing Highlands continue unabated causing severe environmental degradation despite concern from the Federal Government.

Law said action must be taken as reports and interviews among the Orang Asli on the activities indicated that the state government should pay serious attention to the issue.

Earlier, Law presented prizes to six schools adjudged to have active astronomy clubs. -- BERNAMA

HAK RM