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Malaysia to patent its innovative cloud seeding technique, says Law

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Science, Technology and Environment Ministry will patent its innovative technique of cloud seeding using a Mi-17 helicopter.

It involves the use of hygroscopic flare equipment that has begun to attract some foreign interest.

Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding said the Cabinet today requested that the method be patented and tests on it be expedited.

The use of a helicopter was the idea of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and it has proven to be effective in initial tests.

The technique was adapted from a South African method that used a fixed-wing plane instead of a helicopter, which allows 60 flare racks to be attached on it instead of 20 on a plane.

The South African authorities have said that they were interested in the Malaysian technique.

"We are the first in the world to use a helicopter for hygroscopic flare seeding," Law said.

He added that the technique would be patented under the name of the Government of Malaysia.

He said the load of 60 flare racks on the helicopter did not affect its performance and safety. Further tests would be carried out to find out how much rainfall could be achieved using this technique.

With hygroscopic flare seeding, salt particles are released under the clouds where the updraft occurs.

The equipment and technology was acquired from South Africa through Teknik Semasa Sdn Bhd. The cost of the equipment, the transfer of technology, tests and staff training is estimated at RM500,000.

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