

MCA slams Indonesian minister over haze salvo

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MCA international bureau chief Chor Chee Heung has hit out at Indonesia's Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Jero Wacik for accusing Malaysia and Singapore of sullyng the country's name over the haze crisis.

"By shifting blame to Indonesia's immediate neighbours, Wacik's arrogant remarks reek of washing one's hands off responsibility and ignoring remedial action most necessary now in view of the emergency," he said in a statement today.

He added that Wacik should heed Indonesia president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who had apologised over the haze and acknowledged that some statements from the Indonesian side should not have been put across in the way they were.

According to Singapore's Straits Times, Wacik had at an Asean meeting in Bali yesterday accused Malaysia and Singapore of profiting from Indonesia but are now trying to discredit the country.

"It's called sharing, you go through good times together, don't make noise to the world when things go bad. It's just like a husband and wife, don't take your quarrel outside," he was quoted as saying.

Prior to that, Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare Agung Laksono asked Singapore to stop "acting like a child" over its complaints about the haze.

Malaysia and Singapore have been engulfed in smog from fires in Indonesia since last week.

Meanwhile in Malaysia, environmental group EcoKnights urged the government to set up a haze response unit that should be automatically activated when the Air Pollutant Index (API) hits 200.

"We need a unit that deals with environmental crisis in a very fast, efficient and effective manner," said EcoKnights president Yasmin Rasyid.

In a separate statement, Johor's Senai state assemblyperson Wong Shu Qi urged the government to install air quality monitoring devices in every district in the state.

"At the domestic level, the Department of Environment should at least provide accurate, up-to-date data as that information is critical for the people as they go about and plan their daily lives," she said.

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