

PM urges global scientists to solve haze problem

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Alyaa Azhar

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak wants international science experts to come up with solutions to the haze problem.

Najib made this request after opening the third meeting of the chief science advisers and equivalents of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) member countries.

“I would like to add something on the haze issue. We have suffered the haze for the last 18 years.

“I hope our science advisers can discuss this,” Najib said to applause from the audience at the event in Kuala Lumpur today.

Najib said the science advisers should give their advice to the countries concerned on how to cope with the haze problem that is now plaguing Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore in particular.

“How do we cope with this... the slash and burn techniques for clearing land for agriculture?

“Secondly, how do we prevent fires on peat soil, whether deliberate or due to climate change?

“So, I would be very interested to know your findings so that in turn I can raise the matter at the Asean summit and also during the Apec meeting,” he said.

Issue raised with Indonesia president as well

The Apec economies' chief science advisers and equivalents is an informal gathering of scientists to strengthen cooperation in science among the Asia-Pacific countries.

The third meeting convened today and will end tomorrow.

Apart from Malaysia, the scientists attending are from China, Japan, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

Najib on Monday said he had raised the haze issue with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and stated that it had threatened the interests of the people of Malaysia.

The haze disrupted economic, social and educational activities, including leisure and sports which could not be conducted.

The forest fires in Indonesia resulted in a serious haze over Malaysia and other neighbouring countries, with Air Pollutant Index readings at very unhealthy levels and forcing the government to close schools in several states in a move to safeguard the health of students.

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