

DR M TO SEND LETTER TO JOKO OVER HAZE

Yeo hopes Indonesian govt will increase efforts to put out forest fires

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PRIME Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will send an official letter to Indonesian President Joko Widodo over the worsening transboundary haze.

Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin said she met Dr Mahathir recently to discuss the matter and he had agreed to send a letter to Joko.

“The letter was to draw his attention to the issue of transboundary haze.

“(And) as a minister, I hope the Indonesian government will intensify efforts to put out forest fires in Kalimantan and Sumatra,” she said after the closing ceremony of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia’s Engineering-Industry Innovation Day in Johor Baru yesterday.

She was asked on the worsening transboundary haze, which had enveloped the country since Sept 5.

Yeo said she recently met officials from the Indonesian embassy here on the matter.

“I have updated them on the haze issue and they have given their cooperation, too.”

Yeo also addressed claims by Indonesian Environmental Affairs and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar that Malaysia’s haze was not caused by forests burning in the republic.

“Maybe she has yet to visit the Asean Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) website, which is recognised by Asean,” she said.

“The data clearly showed that the haze was from Indonesia. The website revealed that there were initially more than 480 hotspots in Kalimantan, which have increased to 1,188, while there are 431 in Sumatra. In Malaysia, there are only five hotspots.”

Siti Nurbaya had accused Malaysia of not being transparent in its forest fires, saying the haze was caused by fires in Sarawak.

She was quoted as saying that the number of hotspots in Indonesia had seen a downward



trend, despite ASMC showing that the number in Kalimantan and Sumatra had increased.

Yeo had, via a Facebook posting on Wednesday, shared links to the data, which stated that Indonesia was responsible for the haze in Malaysia, and said Siti Nurbaya “should not be in denial”.

She said the authorities were on standby to conduct cloud seeding in Sarawak and would launch into action once the conditions were favourable.