

RECURRING ISSUE

PM: WE NEED LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO HAZE

This entails cooperation of Indonesia, other countries, says Dr Mahathir

AZURA ABAS
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

MALAYSIA is seeking a long-term solution to the transboundary haze issue.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this, however, could only be done with the support of other countries, including Indonesia.

"We've always wanted a long-term solution to the haze problem. We need cooperation from all, including Indonesia and others (involved)," he said at the 2019 Putrajaya Boat Race yesterday.

Asean countries reportedly do not have laws on transboundary haze. Therefore, enforcement was based only on legislation in the respective countries.

Dr Mahathir said he had yet to write to Indonesian President Joko Widodo about the haze.

"We have not written any letter so far. Indonesia has claimed the haze is coming from Malaysia.

"We have to verify if it originates from Malaysia or not."

Indonesia had reportedly dismissed complaints by Malaysia on the hazardous smoke drifting across the border from forest fires in the republic. It claimed fires were also raging in Malaysia and on Malaysian-owned plantations.

Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin had said Dr Mahathir had agreed to write a letter on the haze issue to the republic's president.

More than 4,000 hotspots were detected in central and western Indonesia yesterday as authorities deployed thousands of people to put out fires that had contributed to the haze blanketing parts of Southeast Asia.

The periodic haze affected air quality in many places and had prompted the closure of schools and disrupted travel.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir and his wife, Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, watched the final boat race between Universiti Malaya (UM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) at the Putrajaya Lake.

Present were Federal Territories Minister Khalid Abdul Samad and Putrajaya Corporation president Datuk Dr Aminuddin Hassim.

UPM splashed to the finish line first and secured the 2019 Putrajaya Boat Race championship for the university category.

On Saturday's drone attack on two oil facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia, Dr Mahathir did not discount the possibility of global oil prices rising following the attack, but he was non-committal on whether Malaysia would review the capped fuel prices of RM2.08 per litre for RON95 and RM2.18 per litre for diesel.

"When oil prices go up, in some countries, the fuel tax will be higher, but in Malaysia, we give a subsidy."

Saudi Arabia had reportedly cut its oil output by half after 10 drones hit Saudi Aramco oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais.

The closure of the facilities is expected to impact almost 5.7 million barrels of crude production a day, about five per cent of the world's daily oil production.

On PKR deputy president Datuk Seri Azmin Ali's attendance at Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's anniversary event recently, Dr Mahathir said Bersatu invited all key leaders from other Pakatan Harapan component parties.

Asked if Azmin would join Bersatu, Dr Mahathir said if the PKR deputy president had submitted his membership application, the party would look into it.

On the Umno-Pas pact, Dr Mahathir said he could not understand how Pas could work with Umno, which it had once branded an "infidel".