

**Discussions On Long-term Solution To Haze Problem On Sept 25 – Zahid
Bernama
Sept 20, 2015
From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin**

JAKARTA, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar will leave for Jakarta on Sept 25 to discuss long-term measures to combat the haze problem, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said Malaysia will cooperate with Indonesia to tackle the problem.

"Our Natural Resources and Environment Minister will arrive in Jakarta on Sept 25 to hold further talks with Indonesia and other ASEAN partners," he told a press conference after attending a gathering with Malaysians living in the Indonesian capital at the Malaysian Embassy here Sunday.

On Friday, Ahmad Zahid had said Malaysia and Indonesia will implement long-term measures to resolve the cross-border haze problem which occurs every year.

The haze which affects several countries in Southeast Asia is a recurring annual problem. The main cause is said to forest burning activities for the cultivation of oil palm and other crops in Indonesia, mainly in Sumatra and Kalimantan. Commenting on the government's efforts to provide assistance to Malaysians in Indonesian areas badly hit by the haze, the Deputy Prime Minister said he would discuss this with Malaysia's Ambassador to Indonesia Datuk Seri Zahrain Mohamed Hashim as well as student leaders there.

"The earlier aid rendered was under the National Security Council but now it is under the National Disaster Management Agency. There are also requests for financial aid to Malaysian students in areas badly-hit by the haze, we will look into it," he said.

Commenting on his four-day visit to Indonesia since Friday, his first trip overseas since his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister on July 28, Ahmad Zahid said he chose Indonesia as his first foreign destination, following the tradition of all newly appointed Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers of Malaysia.

"It is to discuss bilateral relations. I conducted several discussions on bilateral relations including issues of common importance such as the need to enhance exchange of intelligence information between enforcement agencies, especially in tackling the threat of terrorism.

"Also the Indonesian workforce in Malaysia as well as their welfare. The process of amnesty for Indonesian illegal immigrants (in Malaysia) was also discussed," he said.

On arrival on Friday morning, Ahmad Zahid had a meeting with the republic's Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan.

This was followed by courtesy call on Indonesian Vice President Jusof Kalla at the Vice-President's Palace.

Yesterday, the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also Home Minister, held a meeting with Indonesian minister for Manpower and Transmigration Muhammad Hanif Dhakiri while today, he met with Home Affairs Minister Tjahjo Kumolo.

Zahid also paid a courtesy call on Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the Presidential Palace in Bogor, about 50km from here.

The visit which lasted about an hour, was an unscheduled programme for Ahmad Zahid in Indonesia, after the President sent him an invitation.

"What is important is that the informal relations between the two countries have resolved several problems including that of the process of bringing in Indonesian workers, as well as the system for legalising workers who want to return to Indonesia with the cooperation of the Indonesian Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

"We have asked them (the Indonesian Embassy) to issue travel documents, and the individual will pay a fine which depends on the duration of their stay in Malaysia," he said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1172949>