

**Najib wants scientists to think up ways to tackle smoke**  
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**By Eileen Ng**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has urged scientists at an international meeting today to brainstorm ideas on how to tackle the annual smoke problem from Indonesia which have choked much of the region, including Malaysia.

He wanted their advice on this problem, pledging to raise their findings at both the Asian summit and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting.

"We have suffered from the problem of haze for the past 18 years and I hope our science advisers can discuss this.

"Please advice countries concerned on how do you cope with this, how can you cope and prevent the slash and burn techniques for clearing land for agriculture.

"Secondly, how do you prevent fires on peat soil, whether it's deliberate or because of climate change.

"It'll be very interested to know your findings, your advice," he said after giving his keynote address at the third Apec Economies' Chief Science Advisors and Equivalents meeting in KL Hilton today.

Both Malaysia and neighbouring Singapore has come under choking smoke due to forest fires from Indonesia.

The fires are illegally set to clear lands for agriculture in Indonesia's island of Sumatra and its portion in Borneo.

In his visit to Indonesia earlier this week, Najib had pledged to help the republic to combat the environment disaster that has caused schools to close, flights shut down and drove thousands to seek medical attention for respiratory illnesses.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo had previously said it would take three years to put an end to the annual forest fires in his country which has been causing smoke to blanket the region annually in the past two decades. – October 15, 2015.

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