

## **Schools to Close If Mean Max Temp above 37 Degrees Celsius More Than 72 Hours**

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PUTRAJAYA, March 18 (Bernama) -- The Special Committee on the extreme hot weather the country is facing now, has issued permanent guidelines on what needs to be done based on three warning levels, which come into force with immediate effect.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, who is also the chairman of the committee, said it was applicable to all quarters including the Education Ministry which must order closure of schools if the mean maximum temperatures are above 37 degrees Celsius for more than 72 hours, which is the second stage in the warning level.

He said under the stage three warning level, a "Heatwave Emergency" would be declared in any area if the mean maximum temperature exceeds 40 degrees Celsius for seven or more days.

"However, the action plan to face such a bad situation will be fine-tuned by the Technical Committee which involves all ministries and government agencies when it meets on Monday (March 21)," he told a press conference here Friday.

He said as for the first stage warning, the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry will issue a heatwave alert for an area if the mean maximum temperature exceeds 37 degrees Celsius three days in a row.

"Following that, the Education Ministry can issue directives to stop outdoor activities like co-curricular activities, assemblies and camps," said Wan Junaidi.

According to him, at this warning level, advisories would also be issued to the public to limit outdoor activities particularly for the elderly and children, to stop all sports activities in open spaces, on work safety and risk of heatstroke.

He said the second stage warning would be issued if the mean maximum temperature exceeds 37 degrees Celsius for more than three days and continues to rise and that this would entail the closure of schools.

"At this stage, the Special Committee will meet to discuss emergency response to the continued extreme hot weather as it would have an impact on various sectors," he said.

Wan Junaidi added that the Meteorological Department forecast that this hot spell due the El Nino phenomenon would end in May or June.

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