

DPM: Bombardier aircraft for firefighting in Miri tomorrow

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- The fire in the peat soil shrub area in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak, which has dragged on from Aug 3, has result in haze enveloping the area to a dangerous level (hazardous).

In this regard, National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) had received the co-operation of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) to use a Bombardier aircraft to douse the peat soil fire.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, in a statement here today, said that the operation to put out the fire using the aircraft would start tomorrow, and at the same time the Fire and Rescue Department would continue effort in the area.

Until to date, a 104 ha area had been razed with 41.5 ha successfully put out.

Dr Wan Azizah said that the Sarawak government had applied to perform cloud seeding operations in the area but the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MET Malaysia) found the atmospheric condition in the area was unstable and not suitable for cloud seeding this week.

NDMA have told MET Malaysia and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) to be prepared to perform cloud seedings if the condition permits,' ' she said.

In the meantime, Dr Wan Azizah advised the populace in the area to reduce outdoor activities and to always wore masks when in the open.

' ' NDMA will also finance the purchase of masks for the Sarawak government,' ' she said.

The Department of Environment (DOE), in its statement today, said that the Air Pollutant Index (API) reading in Miri, Sarawak continued to record a dangerous air quality level (API 361) at

the Industrial Training Institute (ILP), Miri until 11 am today.

SK Kuala Baram 2 also recorded a very unhealthy reading (API 268) resulting from the peat soil shrub area fire near the air quality monitoring stations.

According to a DOE statement, the forest fires in Sumatera and Kalimantan, both in Indonesia, were still causing cross-boundary haze and impacted on the API readings at all the areas on the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia and west of Sarawak.

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