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Hujan Lebat Disebabkan Penghujung Musim Monsun Timur Laut

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 Mac (Bernama) -- Hujan lebat di sekitar Lembah Klang lewat petang Sabtu sehingga pagi ini disebabkan perubahan cuaca menjelang akhir musim Monsun Timur Laut.

Pengarah Bahagian Atmosfera dan Pembenihan Awan, Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia, Azhar Ishak berkata, hujan lebat itu bukan disebabkan operasi pembenihan awan.

"Menjelang akhir musim Monsun Timur Laut, angin timuran membawa hujan," katanya kepada Bernama di sini Ahad.

Beliau berkata, bagaimanapun jabatan itu juga turut mengadakan operasi pembenihan awan seminggu sekali ekoran cuaca panas dan berjerebu sekarang.

Katanya, tujuan utama pembenihan awan adalah untuk meningkatkan paras air di kawasan tadahan selain membantu mengurangkan keadaan jerebu.

-- BERNAMA

Rain clears up haze in several areas

KUALA LUMPUR: Port Klang in Selangor, which has recorded unhealthy levels of haze, saw its Air Pollutant Index (API) drop to 154 at noon yesterday.

Bernama reported that several areas in the state recorded a drop in API readings, including Banting (125), Shah Alam (110) and Petaling Jaya (103). Twenty-two areas in the country recorded moderate API readings, including Seri Manjung (56), Alor Star (51), Cheras (80), and Nilai (91).

An hour-long downpour in several locations on Penang island and the mainland brought cheer to Penangites who had endured a two-month dry spell.

About 5pm, it rained in Seberang Prai Utara and Balik Pulau, while downpours brought thunder, lightning and strong gusts of wind in Air Itam and Tanjung Bungah.

Temperatures dropped to 27°C from the punishing 32°C average

during the dry spell.

The Meteorological Department website said there were forecasted showers today, tomorrow and Tuesday in Penang.



DRY SPELL

Intermittent rain since Friday night in several districts in Pahang doused bush and peat fires, apart from clearing the haze.

A spokesman at the Pahang Fire and Rescue operations centre said the downpour also helped control the peat fire along Jalan Kuantan-Pekan. But

oil palm plantations in Nenasi, Pekan and Sungai Endau in Rompin are still affected by peat fires.

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Strong winds and swift-moving rain clouds help clear haze

By ISABELLE LAI

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PETALING JAYA: Strong winds and swift-moving rain clouds helped clear the sky stricken by haze in parts of peninsular Malaysia, said the Meteorological Department.

A spokesman said rainfall had started in the morning over several areas in the east coast before moving gradually to northern and central states by evening.

In addition, he said strong north-easterly winds had also helped disperse the haze particles, which had caused air quality in Port Klang and Banting to reach hazardous levels on Friday.

"We recorded rain clouds moving

across Selangor and the Klang Valley, bringing brief and moderate rainfall over several areas. Parts of Negri Sembilan and Malacca also experienced isolated showers," he said when contacted yesterday.

However, he said that the rain clouds had been blown out to the Straits of Malacca before they could bring significant rainfall over Johor.

He said that visibility had also improved significantly.

As of 5pm yesterday, the Department of Environment's Air Pollutant Index (API) showed no places in Malaysia were experiencing hazardous air quality.

Three places recorded unhealthy air quality: Port Klang (124), Banting (103) and Tanjung Malim (123).

An API reading between 0 and 50 is considered good; 51 to 100, moderate; 101 to 200, unhealthy; 201 to 300, very unhealthy; and 301 and above, hazardous.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri G. Palanivel said on Friday that the DOE's ban on open burning was now extended to Negri Sembilan, Malacca, Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya effective March 13.

"No open burning can be done in these areas except for certain activities such as cremation, for religious purposes and barbecues. Those caught carrying out open burning can be fined not more than RM500,000, jailed not more than five years or both," he said, adding

that a maximum compound of RM2,000 could also be imposed for each offence.

Meanwhile, AirAsia cancelled all flights to and from Pekanbaru until Wednesday due to low visibility caused by the severe haze.

It said in a statement that flights were expected to resume on Thursday, depending on how much visibility improved.

The AirAsia flights affected by the cancellations are Kuala Lumpur-Pekanbaru, Pekanbaru-Kuala Lumpur, Pekanbaru-Bandung, Bandung-Pekanbaru, Pekanbaru-Medan and Medan-Pekanbaru.

Affected passengers can choose one of two service recovery options: 1) Changing their flight departure

date within seven days of the original date without additional charges and 2) use a credit shell equivalent to the value of the confirmed booking for any AirAsia flight, valid for three months from the date of issue.

"All affected guests will be notified via their registered member e-mail account as well as an SMS notification of the cancellations. We urge all guests to keep their e-mail address and mobile numbers with their country code prefix updated in their AirAsia member profiles," it said.

For more information, visit www.airasia.com/ask, www.facebook.com/AirAsia, www.twitter.com/AirAsia or call its Indonesian call centre at +62 21 2927 0999.

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Amaran Angin Kencang, Laut Bergelora Di Perairan Pantai Negara Sehingga Selasa

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 Mac (Bernama) -- Angin kencang dan laut bergelora kategori pertama yang kini melanda perairan Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Sarawak, Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan dan Sabah dijangka berterusan sehingga Selasa depan.

Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia dalam kenyataan hari ini memaklumkan tiupan angin dengan kelajuan dari 40 kmsj serta ketinggian ombak mencapai 3.5 meter itu, berbahaya kepada bot-bot kecil, aktiviti rekreasi laut dan sukan laut.

Ribut petir yang berlaku di perairan Langkawi, Perlis, Kedah dan Pulau Pinang dan amaran ketampakan rendah kurang dari 5km di sekitar perairan sama dijangka berterusan sehingga Ahad.

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Gempa Bumi Sederhana Melanda Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 Mac (Bernama) -- Gempa bumi sederhana berukuran 5.4 pada skala Richter melanda Sumatera Utara, Indonesia.

Menurut **Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia**, pusat gempa pada 6.58 petang Sabtu itu ialah di 25km barat daya Permatang Siantar, Indonesia dan 233km barat daya Sabak Bernam, Selangor.

-- BERNAMA