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Decision on schools today

Ministry to make announcement if temperatures stay above 39°C

KOTA BARU: The Education Ministry will announce today whether schools in certain areas of the country will be closed due to the hot weather, even as the haze level continues to rise in the Klang Valley.

Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said his ministry was monitoring the hot weather situation and on Saturday, it was found that Kedah and Perlis recorded temperatures as high as 39.2°C.

The ministry will decide whether schools in certain areas should be closed if the temperature continues to rise above 39°C without any sign of dropping.

Speaking to reporters after attending a gathering with princi-

pals and headmasters of schools in Kelantan yesterday, Mahdzir said a special committee at the ministry level chaired by Education director-general Datuk Seri Dr Khair Mohamad Yusof would make a decision on the closure of affected schools.

He said he had already issued a directive for all activities outside the classroom to be stopped due to the extremely hot weather.

Malaysia is now experiencing hot and dry weather caused by the El Nino phenomenon and the Malaysian Meteorological Department has predicted that the situation will only end in May or June.

Science, Technology and

Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau said the higher than usual temperatures were due to El Nino and not the March Equinox which occurred yesterday.

Yesterday's Equinox event occurred when the sun shone directly over the Equator.

Tangau also attributed the haze in the Klang Valley to the dry weather, open burning and local bush fires.

On another matter, concerning a solution to the issue of married teachers living away from their spouses, Mahdzir said the ministry was resolving this in stages.

He said the issue was resolved for 2,000 teachers last year, and 560

teachers up to this month.

The ministry has received 7,000 applications for transfers from teachers who wished to stay close to their spouses, he added.

On the ban on watches being taken into examination halls by candidates taking the *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) 2016 and the Malaysian University English Test, Mahdzir said he would seek a report on the matter from Malaysian Examination Council chief executive Dr Jamil Adimin.

Yesterday, Dr Jamil was reported as saying that the prohibition on wristwatches in examination halls was aimed at preventing misconduct by candidates. — Bernama

KERATAN AKHBAR
MALAY MAIL (TOP NEWS) : MUKA SURAT 5
TARIKH : 21 MAC 2016 (ISNIN)

Much ado over the equinox

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PETALING JAYA — The equinox came and went without much fanfare yesterday, with the highest temperatures in Chuping and Alor Star at 38°C at 3pm.

The heatwave, combined with the occurrence of the equinox, was expected to cause the mercury to rise above 39°C from noon to 3.30pm.

In the Klang Valley, it even poured heavily for about 20 minutes at about 1.40pm and again in the evening.

Science, Technology and Innovation minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau said in a statement yesterday the hot and

dry weather in Perlis and Kedah were expected to be felt throughout Peninsular Malaysia as well as Sabah and in Limbang and Miri, Sarawak.

Tangau said this was because the El Nino phenomenon was expected to cause a 20 to 60 per cent reduction in rainfall as well as an increase of about 0.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above normal temperatures.

"The public are advised to use water prudently and cut down on outdoor activities throughout this period," he said.

The Health Ministry downplayed the upshot of the scorching heat in the last two weeks, saying the heatwave had not caused any staggering increase of outpatients in government clinics.

Its director-general, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, said the high temperatures also had not caused dehydration cases to be on the rise.

"According to reports from family medicine specialists (FMS) from all states, the recent heatwave has not caused an undue increase of outpatients in our clinics, nor have there been any significant increase of patients coming with signs of dehydration," he told *Malay Mail* yesterday.

He said all paramedics and FMS have been told to be on the alert.

Dr Noor Hisham said there had been no new cases reported to the ministry over the weekend.

There were 17 heat-related illnesses from March 1 to Friday, including three heatstroke cases, one of which ended in a fatality.

Azizan Ayob, 23, a police trainee, had fainted while undergoing training at Segamat Police training Centre and died soon after.

Temperature forecast today



Kota Baru	Max: 32°C
Kuala Terengganu	Max: 32°C
Kuantan	Max: 33°C
George Town	Max: 34°C
Ipoh	Max: 36°C
Alor Star	Max: 37°C
Chuping	Max: 35°C
Kangar	Max: 34°C
Putrajaya	Max: 34°C
Kuala Lumpur	Max: 35°C
Petaling Jaya	Max: 35°C
Seremban	Max: 34°C
Malacca	Max: 33°C
Johor Baru	Max: 34°C
Kuching	Max: 33°C
Kota Kinabalu	Max: 33°C
Labuan	Max: 33°C

Decision today on closure of schools in hot areas



Nurul Syafikah Ruslan (left) and Nur Aida Qistina Azmi, both 12, drink water at SK Haji Abu Bakar, Mukim Lepai in Alor Star, to avoid dehydration. — Picture by Bernama

KOTA BARU — The Education Ministry will decide today if schools in areas affected by extreme heat will be closed, its minister, Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, said.

He said the ministry was monitoring the weather, and on Saturday, it was found that Kedah and Perlis recorded temperatures as high as 39.2 degrees Celsius.

"Today (Sunday), we will look at the temperature situation in Kedah and Perlis, and tomorrow we will decide whether schools in certain areas should be closed if the temperature continues to rise above 39 degrees Celsius," he told reporters after attending a gathering with principals and headmasters of schools in Kelantan.

Mahdzir said a special committee at the ministry level chaired by Director-



General of Education Datuk Seri Dr Khair Mohamad Yusof would make a decision concerning the closure of schools.

He said his ministry was also getting information from time to time on the hot weather from the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry, and Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry.

Mahdzir said he had issued a directive for all activities outside the classroom to be stopped.

Malaysia is experiencing hot and dry weather caused by the El Nino phenomenon, which the Malaysian Meteorological Department predicted will only end in May or June.

In Terengganu, all schools are required to provide sufficient drinking water to students.

State Education Department director Shafruddin Ali Hussain said the school session that resumed yesterday went on smoothly.

"The department also recommends that schools provide students with sponges and water to wipe the body as athletes do to prevent dehydration," he said.

— Bernama

