

KERATAN AKHBAR-AKHBAR TEMPATAN
TARIKH: 6 APRIL 2016 (RABU)

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MetMalaysia, RMAF on standby for cloud seeding in Sabah

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia) and Malaysian Royal Air Force (RMAF) have been put on standby to do cloud seeding exercise following the haze situation in Sabah, said **Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti) Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau.**

He, however, said the cloud seeding exercise was subjected to suitable clouds.

"Malaysian Meteorological Department has been instructed to go ahead with cloud seeding even if it means Mosti have to bear the expenses," he said in a statement today.

Madius said Mosti was aware of the situation and conducting round the clock monitoring on the haze which is currently blanketing areas in the west coast of Sabah.

Sabah Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Musa Aman had been informed on the status of haze in the state which would be monitored closely by the department, he added.

Several areas in Sabah's west coast have recorded air pollution index reading of more than 200 lately.

On Sunday, 77 schools in three districts, namely Kuala Penyu, Papar and Beaufort, were announced to be closed today due to poor air quality.

Six more primary and secondary schools in three districts of Sabah are closed today and tomorrow due to the haze.



Batu Embun Catat Suhu Melebihi 37 Darjah Celsius

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 April (Bernama) -- Kawasan Batu Embun, Pahang hari ini mencatatkan bacaan suhu melebihi 37 darjah Celsius selama tiga hari berturut-turut berikutan cuaca panas melampau yang melanda negara ketika ini.

Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau berkata Batu Embun mencatatkan suhu maksimum tertinggi iaitu 37.6 darjah Celsius diikuti Chuping, Perlis dengan suhu 37.2 darjah Celsius.

"Hanya satu kawasan yang masih mencatatkan bilangan hari tanpa hujan melebihi 30 hari sehingga semalam iaitu di Seberang Perai, Pulau Pinang (36 hari)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan di sini hari ini.

-- BERNAMA

Wan Junaidi 'lejuk' with Indonesia over haze MoU

By Anith Adilah
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SERDANG — Datuk Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar is one irate minister when it comes to the delay in signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indonesia to combat the annual haze problem.

"The Sarawakian word to describe how I am feeling is 'lejuk', or loosely translated ... fed up. I cannot find any word in Malay or English which could explain it better," he told reporters after attending his Natural Resources and Environment Ministry's Excellence Service Awards yesterday.

"To be honest, I have had enough of trying. It is exhausting."

The MoU was proposed after Asean ratified the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution last July.

Since then, there has been little progress in getting it signed.

Wan Junaidi was scheduled to ink the

MoU with his Indonesian counterpart before the end of last year but meetings were repeatedly postponed.

It contains four steps to overcome haze — law enforcement, better peat soil management, zero burning practice for the Indonesians, and collaboration between both countries when fires break out.

After a state of haze emergency was declared in Sarawak in 1997 due to forest and plantation fires in Southern Sumatra, Kalimantan, Malaysia has been trying to work out a joint effort with Indonesia to solve the haze problem.

In August 2005, Malaysia declared another state of emergency in Port Klang and Kuala Selangor after the air pollutant index exceeded 500, indicating a dangerous level.

An MoU was signed in June 2008 during the tenure of then-minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas, between Malaysia and Riau which saw farmers from Rokan Hilir in Riau attending workshops on zero-burning technique at the Selangor

Agriculture Department.

The MoU also saw Malaysia contributing RM2 million to provide support services on rehabilitation of burnt peat soil and the installation of a haze early warning system.

Talk of the Malaysia-Indonesia MoU started again after haze struck Malaysia badly last year, which saw school closing in several states including Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak when the API breached 200 — the "very unhealthy" mark.

Separately, Wan Junaidi said the ministry planned to increase the number of check dams and tube wells in the country as they were effective in preventing and controlling peatland fires.

This was reflected in the cases of peatland fires at Beris Lalang, Kampung Gondang and Kual in Bachok, Kelantan, last month.

"The fires did not spread and there was no localised haze due to the presence of a check dam. The dam retains water which was soaked by the peat soil and then wet itself, subsequently putting the fire out."

Wan Junaidi said tube wells were also effective in curbing peat fires from getting out of control as the mechanisms allowed them to pump water from underground to the surface to maintain its moisture and lower the risks of catching fire.

The ministry built 236 check dams and 59 tube wells across the country with plans to build several more dams and five wells in Terengganu, Sarawak and Kelantan.

He said the ministry was also having internal discussions before acquiring external expertise from other government bodies including the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry to ensure dam levels stay above 50 per cent.



MOSTI Peruntuk Dana RM10 Juta Untuk Projek Ekonomi Komuniti Bioteknologi

ALOR GAJAH, 5 April (Bernama) -- Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi (MOSTI) memperuntukkan dana Mosti Social Innovation (MSI) berjumlah RM10 juta untuk pelaksanaan 30 projek ekonomi komuniti berasaskan bioteknologi di negara ini, kata Timbalan Menteri Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah.

Katanya dana disalurkan kepada Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd di bawah Program Pembangunan Komuniti Bioekonomi (BCDP) itu menyasarkan penglibatan 500 petani dengan pulangan purata pendapatan kira-kira RM4,500 sebulan bagi setiap peserta.

Beliau berkata setakat ini sebanyak empat projek di bawah BCDP telah berjaya dilaksanakan melibatkan 375 petani dari seluruh negara sehingga bulan lepas antaranya melibatkan tanaman kacang fatimah, rumpai laut, cendawan dan ternakan udang.

"Pelaksanaan BCDP memberi fokus untuk meningkatkan tahap pendapatan isi rumah 40 peratus terendah ke tahap yang lebih tinggi selaras dengan fokus dalam Rancangan Malaysia ke-11 untuk meningkatkan ekonomi rakyat dan memastikan modal ekonomi negara akan terus berkembang.

Pendekatan ini bukan sahaja menyediakan peluang saksama kepada rakyat untuk terlibat dalam projek BCDP malah mereka akan mendapat manfaat daripada inisiatif bioekonomi negara setanding dengan negara maju," katanya kepada pemberita di sini hari ini.

Terdahulu beliau merasmikan majlis penyerahan projek MSI bagi pengeluaran madu lebah melalui BCDP kepada Persatuan Penternak Madu Lebah Komersial Kuala Linggi dihadiri Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal.

Pada majlis itu Abu Bakar menyerahkan 54 kotak lebah kepada lapan peserta daripada Persatuan Penternak Madu Lebah Komersial Kuala Linggi melibatkan dana berjumlah RM100,000.

Abu Bakar berkata projek penternakan madu lebah berkenaan mendapat kepakaran daripada syarikat pengeluar madu terbesar di negara iaitu Flora Bee Hive Enterprise Sdn Bhd dengan pemantauan Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn Bhd.

"Projek ini dijangka mampu membangunkan industri madu lebah tempatan khususnya di kawasan Kuala Linggi bagi memenuhi permintaan di peringkat tempatan dan antarabangsa yang akan dibeli Flora Bee Hive Enterprise Sdn Bhd," katanya.

Mengulas permohonan Kerajaan Negeri Melaka untuk melaksanakan pembenihan awan di negeri ini, Abu Bakar berkata MOSTI bersedia melaksanakan proses itu pada bila-bila masa sekiranya terdapat awan yang sesuai.

"Kita tidak mempunyai sebarang masalah untuk melaksanakan kerana MOSTI mempunyai peruntukan dan teknologi yang cukup tetapi proses ini memerlukan awan jenis 'Towering Cumulus'." katanya.

Semalam Bernama melaporkan Melaka akan memohon Kerajaan Persekutuan melaksanakan pembenihan awan sekiranya tiada hujan turun untuk menambah bekalan air di negeri itu dalam tempoh 14 hari bermula semalam.

-- BERNAMA

KERATAN AKHBAR
UTUSAN MALAYSIA (DALAM NEGERI) : MUKA SURAT 23
TARIKH : 6 APRIL 2016 (RABU)



ABU BAKAR MOHAMAD DIAH (dua dari kanan), Ismail Othman (kanan) dan Mohd. Nazlee Kamal (kiri) melihat kotak sarang lebah madu yang diserahkan kepada peserta Pembangunan Komuniti Bioekonomi di Alor Gajah, Melaka, semalam. - UTUSAN/AZLI AHAD

Perluaskan projek ekonomi dalam bioteknologi

ALOR GAJAH 5 April - Kerajaan akan terus melaksanakan Program Pembangunan Komuniti Bioekonomi (BCDP) iaitu satu program peringkat nasional yang bertujuan meningkatkan pendapatan peserta yang terlibat dengan pelbagai aktiviti ekonomi berasaskan kepada bidang bioteknologi.

Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi, Datuk Dr. Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah berkata, untuk tahun ini, pihaknya menyasarkan sebanyak 30 projek BCDP dengan penglibatan sebanyak 500 peserta, khususnya pengusaha dalam pelbagai sektor dan mampu memberi purata pendapatan bulanan sehingga RM4,500 setiap seorang.

Beliau berkata, empat projek bioteknologi di bawah program BCDP sedang dilaksanakan sehingga Mac tahun ini melibatkan 375 peserta iaitu dua projek tanaman cendawan serta masing-masing satu projek ternakan udang dan tanaman rumput.

"Menerusi program ternakan lebah madu ini, kementerian memperuntukkan sejumlah RM100,000 kepada Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (Biotech) dan melantik syarikat Flora Bee Hive untuk kepakaran mereka dalam ternakan madu lebah dan akhirnya yang mendapat manfaat adalah ahli persatuan penternak lebah madu.

"Menerusi ternakan lebah madu ini iaitu satu projek di bawah Inovasi Sosial kementerian, peserta terbabit boleh menghasilkan madu lebah sehingga 10 kilogram setiap 45 hari bagi setiap kotak dan apa yang menarik, Flora Bee Hive akan membeli produk ini, sekali gus memberi pendapatan tambahan kepada peserta," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian dalam sidang akhbar selepas menghadiri Majlis Penyerahan Projek Inovasi Sosial Mosti (MSD) pengeluaran madu lebah menerusi program BCDP kepada Persatuan Penternak Madu Lebah Komersial Kuala Linggi di Stesen Institut Penyelidikan dan Kemajuan Pertanian Malaysia (MARDI) Kuala Linggi dekat sini hari ini.

Yang turut hadir Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Perumahan, Kerajaan Tempatan dan Alam Sekitar negeri yang juga Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri (ADUN) kawasan Kuala Linggi, Datuk Ismail Othman; Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Malaysian Biotech, Datuk Dr. Mohd. Nazlee Kamal dan Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Flora Bee Hive Sdn. Bhd., Eric Tang.

Pada majlis itu, Abu Bakar menyampaikan 54 buah kotak berisi koloni lebah madu dan peralatan menternak lebah kepada lapan ahli Persatuan Penternak Madu Lebah Komersial Kuala Linggi untuk diusahakan.

Projek ternakan lebah madu itu

dijalankan dengan usaha syarikat Flora Bee Hive iaitu syarikat penaja utama ternakan lebah madu yang dilantik Biotech untuk melaksanakan program ternakan tersebut.

Menurut Abu Bakar, projek ternakan lebah madu ini bukan kali pertama dilaksanakan, sebaliknya Biotech akan terus melaksanakan program seperti ini membabitkan penyertaan lebih ramai peserta tempatan.

Katanya, menerusi langkah ini juga, kerajaan akan membantu peserta melalui teknik beli balik produk iaitu mengeluarkan geran kepada agensi kementerian untuk mengusahakan sesuatu projek dan pada masa sama, hasilnya akan diberikan kepada peserta.

"Melalui BCDP, kita memperuntukkan sejumlah RM10 juta geran kepada Biotech untuk melaksanakan pelbagai aktiviti bioekonomi dan tidak terbatas kepada lebah madu sahaja, sebaliknya apa sahaja bidang teknologi biologi seperti ternakan ikan dan udang serta perusahan herba.

"Malah, saya difahamkan teknologi lebah madu kini semakin mendapat permintaan yang tinggi kerana bahan daripada madu itu juga digunakan dalam penjagaan kulit dan matlamat kita untuk meningkatkan kualiti penggunaan produk melalui usaha nilai tambah," katanya.

Menerusi program ternakan lebah madu ini, kementerian memperuntukkan sejumlah RM100,000 kepada Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation Sdn. Bhd. (Biotech) dan melantik syarikat Flora Bee Hive."

ABU BAKAR MOHAMAD DIAH
Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi



Deputy Minister Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah (right) holding a honeycomb while Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation chief executive officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal (left) looks on during a visit to the Mosti Social Innovation honey production project in Alor Gajah, Malacca, yesterday. Pic by Rasul Azli Samad

Ministry ready to do cloud seeding

WATER SHORTAGE:

It can help states
if there are
cumulus clouds

**KELLY KOH
AND MICHELE NG**
ALOR GAJAH
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THE Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) is ready to assist states facing water shortage with cloud seeding.

Its deputy minister, Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah, said the ministry had set aside funding, equipment and logistics for cloud seeding and would carry it out after cumulus clouds were sighted.

"The ministry has received applications from several states to carry out cloud seeding.

"We have no problem helping them, as long as there are cumulus clouds.

"We have sufficient funds and can ask for additional funds from the National Security Council, should the need arise," he said.

Abu Bakar said this at the handing over of the Mosti Social Innovation honey production project to Kuala

Linggi Commercial Honey Farmers Association at Mardi Kuala Linggi Station here yesterday.

Present were Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation chief executive officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal, Flora Bee Hive director Eric Tang and Kuala Linggi assemblyman Datuk Ismail Othman.

Abu Bakar said while rain had improved several areas in Perlis, Kedah, Kuala Lumpur and Malacca, the ministry was monitoring weather conditions and making plans to deploy resources for cloud seeding.

"Emphasis will be given to areas most affected by the heatwave.

"We have received applications from Johor, Sabah, Malacca and Selangor. We will act at the right time, even for states that did not ask for cloud seeding.

"We can carry out cloud seeding with about a 95 per cent success of rainfall within two hours, if there are cumulus clouds."

On Monday, Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Idris Haron said cloud seeding might be carried out in the state if the heatwave and dry spell continues over the next two weeks.

As at yesterday, the Malacca Water Regulatory Body data showed that the water level at Durian Tunggal Dam in Alor Gajah was at 57.1 per cent, while the water levels at Jus and Asahan dams in Jasin were at 77.3 per cent and 89.1 per cent.



KERATAN AKHBAR
UTUSAN MALAYSIA (DALAM NEGERI) : MUKA SURAT 9
TARIKH : 6 APRIL 2016 (RABU)

info

EL NINO

- Bermula Ogos 2015 dan dijangka berakhir Jun 2016

Monsun timur laut

- November hingga Mac (hujan lebat)

Musim peralihan

- April hingga Mei (cuaca lembap)

Monsun barat daya

- Jun hingga September (cuaca kering)

El Nino dijangka berakhir Jun ini

KUALA LUMPUR 5 April - Fenomena El Nino yang melanda negara ini sejak Ogos tahun lalu telah mula melemah dan dijangka berakhir sepenuhnya pada Jun ini.

Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Meteorologi, Datuk Che Gayah Ismail berkata, hal demikian disebabkan bermulanya musim peralihan daripada angin monsun timur laut sejak awal bulan ini dan dijangka berakhir pada pertengahan atau akhir Mei ini.

"Sekarang hingga akhir Mei ini



CHE GAYAH ISMAIL

cuaca lembap terutama di kawasan pantai barat Semenanjung. Kawasan tersebut akan mengalami ribut petir di sebelah petang sehingga awal malam," katanya ketika dihubungi *Utusan Malaysia* di sini hari ini.

Che Gayah berkata, selepas berakhirnya musim peralihan, negara akan mengalami monsun barat daya mulai Jun sehingga September.

Katanya, dengan berakhirnya El Nino, monsun barat daya kali ini dijangka kembali normal dengan cuaca kering yang biasa.



200 Hektar Kawasan Hutan Simpan Binsuluk Masih Terbakar - Wan Junaidi

PUTRAJAYA, 5 April (Bernama) -- Kawasan seluas 200 hektar di Hutan Simpan Binsuluk di Beaufort, Sabah masih terbakar, kata Menteri Sumber Asli dan Alam Sekitar Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar.

Beliau berkata kawasan seluas 20 hektar di luar kawasan Hutan Simpan Klias di Beaufort juga dilaporkan masih terbakar.

Kawasan hutan di Kimanis/Bongawan dan Jalan Membakut/Bongawan yang sebelum ini mengalami kebakaran seluas 300 hektar, 200 hektar daripadanya berjaya dipadamkan kira-kira 80 peratus, katanya.

"Kebakaran di Hutan Simpan Padas Damit yang terbakar seluas 50 hektar sudah padam 100 peratus," katanya dalam kenyataan hari ini berhubung status kebakaran hutan di Beaufort, Sabah.

Wan Junaidi berkata kebakaran tersebut berpunca daripada aktiviti pekebun kecil yang melakukan pembakaran secara terbuka yang merebak ke kawasan hutan simpan.

Berdasarkan siasatan Jabatan Alam Sekitar (JAS) pada tahun ini sehingga semalam, sebanyak 1,047 kes pembakaran terbuka dikesan di seluruh negara iaitu pembakaran terbuka melibatkan kawasan hutan (147 kes), kawasan pertanian (298 kes), kawasan industri (lapan kes), tapak pembinaan (24 kes), tapak pelupusan sampah (46 kes), kawasan belukar (190 kes) dan lain-lain pembakaran terbuka kecil (334 kes), katanya.

"Bagi tindakan penguatkuasaan untuk tempoh sama, sebanyak 77 kes pembakaran terbuka telah dikenakan tindakan kompaun, 20 kes telah dikeluarkan Notis Arahan dan 11 kes telah dikeluarkan Surat Arahan.

"Selain itu, sebanyak empat kes pembakaran terbuka telah disediakan kertas siasatan untuk diambil tindakan mahkamah," katanya.

Dalam pada itu, katanya, menurut laporan [Jabatan Meteorologi](#) sehingga hari ini, bahagian pantai barat Sabah tidak mengalami hujan selama 22 hari berturut-turut, manakala Kudat (21 hari) dan Keningau (sembilan hari).

Mengenai kualiti udara di beberapa kawasan di Sabah terutamanya di Beaufort, Wan Junaidi berkata bacaan Indeks Pencemaran Udara (IPU) hari ini menurun ke paras sederhana berbanding tidak sihat semalam.

-- BERNAMA



Jangan Lakukan Pembakaran Terbuka - Musa

KOTA KINABALU, 5 April (Bernama) -- Orang ramai dinasihatkan agar tidak melakukan pembakaran terbuka bagi mengelak impak keadaan jerebu serta fenomena El Nino sekarang menjadi bertambah buruk.

Ketua Menteri Sabah Datuk Seri Musa Aman sebaliknya meminta semua lapisan rakyat bersama-sama dengan agensi kerajaan bagi mengurangkan impak musim panas dan kering yang kini melanda negara.

"Semalam saya telah berjumpa dengan pengarah Jabatan Alam Sekitar, Jabatan Meteorologi serta Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat dan meminta mereka bersama-sama tangani masalah ini.

"Yang penting orang ramai mesti bertanggungjawab. Jangan adakan pembakaran terbuka kerana ini boleh mengundang bahaya," katanya kepada pemberita selepas merasmikan Sabah Road Day 2016 di sini hari ini.

Musa berkata beliau telah meminta Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Tan Sri Sukarti Wakiman selaku Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Bencana Alam Negeri bagi mengarahkan semua pegawai daerah selaku pengerusi Jawatankuasa Bencana Alam di peringkat daerah agar sentiasa memantau dan bertindak menangani sebarang masalah yang timbul berikutan fenomena ini.

Katanya fenomena El Nino adalah di luar kawalan manusia namun masyarakat keseluruhannya perlu sentiasa berjaga-jaga dan berusaha bagaimana untuk menangani masalah yang berlaku.

Mengenai impak jerebu kepada pelajar, Musa berkata agensi kerajaan berkaitan telah mengambil langkah mengarahkan sekolah ditutup apabila keadaan jerebu mencapai tahap tidak sihat bagi menjaga kesihatan pelajar dan rakyat keseluruhannya.

Dalam perkembangan lain, Musa yang juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Keselamatan Negeri Sabah berkata isu perdagangan pertukaran barang (barter trade) antara Sabah dan selatan Filipina adalah antara perkara yang akan dibincang dalam mesyuarat Kabinet negeri Sabah esok.

Musa berkata beliau mengadakan perbincangan secara mendalam dengan pegawai tinggi keselamatan di Sabah termasuk Pesuruhjaya Polis Sabah (Datuk Abdul Rashid Harun) mengenai langkah dan kaedah yang akan dilakukan untuk mengekang insiden jenayah rentas sempadan termasuk penculikan.

"...Semua cadangan ini akan dibawa ke mesyuarat Kabinet negeri esok dan akan dibincang dengan Jemaah Menteri. Jemaah Menteri akan memperakukan apakah cadangan itu boleh diterima pakai atau dilaksanakan nanti," katanya.

Villages facing drought to get water supply, says Pairin

KOTA KINABALU: The state government is providing water supply to areas which are facing a water shortage due to the hot and dry weather.

Deputy Chief Minister Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan, who is also state infrastructure development minister, said the affected areas were in Tawau, Kuala Penyu, and the interior.

"There are villagers who have asked for water assistance and all district officers and district water departments have been instructed to take action and provide water supply to areas in need.

"Currently, the situation is not critical and water supply is sufficient. We advise the public to conserve water during this drought season," he said yesterday.

To a question on how long the water reserves at Babagon Dam in Penampang and Telibong Dam in Tamparuli could last if the hot weather persisted, Pairin said they could last until August.

"We are hoping for rainfall during the third week of this month. We understand that the Meteorological Department has predicted that the El Nino weather phenomenon will end in June but there are signs that this may change."

Meanwhile, the haze situation in Sabah improved yesterday and the Meteorological Department forecasted isolated rain in Sabah's west coast and isolated thunderstorms in the interior.

The Air Pollutant Index (API) also

improved in Papar, Beaufort and Kuala Penyu districts, where the API reading had reached a very unhealthy level in the last few days.

The haze was caused by land clearing activities by farmers, with fire spreading to 220ha of forest reserves in Beaufort, prompting the state Education Department to close

down 83 schools on Monday and Tuesday.

Yesterday's API reading in the three districts had gone down to a moderate-level with a reading of 95.

The state Education Department acting director Maimunah Suhaibul said schools would be re-opened today following the improved air quality, adding the department would continue to monitor the situation.

"I have directed the district education officers to inform schools to operate as usual. Based on the two-day weather observation (by the Department of Environment), the API reading is likely to be stable."

To date, the state Fire and Rescue Department recorded over 2,086 fires, with one fatality, related to open burning and extreme hot weather. This includes the bush fire in Beaufort where firemen took eight days to put out the blaze.

On March 22, a 79-year-old farmer was killed after a fire broke out at a rubber farm in Kampung Purak Kogis in Kota Belud. It was reported that the farmer was clearing her farm through open burning and that the fire spread to nearby vegetation.

There are villagers who have asked for water assistance and all district officers and district water departments have been instructed to take action and provide water supply to areas in need.

Tan Sri Joseph Pairin Kitingan
Sabah deputy chief minister



Dua Gempa Sederhana Landa Indonesia Petang Tadi - Meteorologi

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 April (Bernama) -- Dua gempa bumi berukuran 5.8 dan 5.1 pada skala Richter melanda Indonesia petang tadi.

Gempa bumi pertama berukuran 5.8 skala Richter berlaku di Pulau Tilaud, yang berpusat 111 kilometer (km) barat laut pulau itu dan 833 km timur laut Semporna, Sabah pada 4.29 petang waktu Malaysia.

Gempa kedua berukuran 5.1 skala Richter pula berlaku di Halmahera, yang berpusat 141 km barat daya Tidore dan 1,090 km tenggara Semporna pada 4.52 petang, kata [Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia](#) dalam kenyataannya hari ini.

Kedua-dua gempa bumi tidak mengakibatkan ancaman tsunami.

-- BERNAMA

Southeast Asia's nuclear dreams

By Lin Yanqin

WHEN the Singapore government recently said it was reviewing whether to lift curbs on food imports from Japan's Fukushima prefecture, it prompted a ripple of concern among the public, who wondered if it was too soon.

A radiation leak at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, which resulted from an earthquake in 2011, put fears of a nuclear fallout hitting the region on the consciousness of Singaporeans for the first time.

Until then, nuclear power and its risks were a distant concept. But lesser known is the fact that for decades, Singapore has lived alongside neighbours with small-scale research nuclear reactors, including Indonesia (three), Thailand (one), Vietnam (one) and Malaysia (one). The Republic, along with New Zealand, is the only Pacific Rim country with no research reactor, according to the World Nuclear Association, which promotes nuclear power.

Among the key nuclear developments in Southeast Asia is the Ninh Thuan 1 plant in Vietnam, which is expected to have a capacity of around 4,000 megawatts, meeting three to four per cent of the country's total electricity demand. Vietnam is working with Russia's state nuclear firm on the plant, which will start construction in 2020. It is also working with a Japanese consortium to develop a second nuclear plant.

In Indonesia, plans to operate four nuclear power plants by 2025 with a total capacity of six gigawatts have been shelved in the wake of public objection, but its plans for its first experimental 10-megawatt nuclear power plant in Serpong in Banten province

remains on track to start construction next year.

Dr Michael Malley of the Naval Postgraduate School and Dr Tanya Ogilvie-White of the University of Canterbury noted that at a 2011 international conference on nuclear challenges in Southeast Asia, participants, especially those from outside the region, felt Southeast Asian governments "have not done enough to prepare for worst-case scenarios".

Protecting nuclear material and facilities from terrorists is a key concern. Indeed, it was the impetus for United States President Barack Obama to initiate the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in 2009, the fourth edition of which began last Tuesday, with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong among those in attendance.

In 2014, a report by the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University highlighted the risks in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia's nuclear ambitions. For example, Vietnam's emergency protocol still did not conform to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) standards, and it did not have a comprehensive nuclear power plant security plan as well as a management plan for spent fuel.

Indonesia is relatively better prepared, as it has been mulling nuclear power since 1956. The country has in place two agencies overseeing the implementation and regulation of nuclear power and inter-agency groups to coordinate disaster response. The IAEA also conducted an Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review in Indonesia in 2009, and while it was not made public, the Indonesian government has said it confirms the country's extensive preparatory work. But the NTS Centre researchers noted objections, such as "distrust towards the government's capability in dealing with

nuclear emergencies, financial constraints, Indonesia's vulnerability to natural disasters, and corrupt practices".

Nuclear power has not been ruled out by Malaysia, but there has been "serious concerns over the safe disposal of nuclear waste and the independence and impartiality of the Malaysian regulatory body, Atomic Energy Licensing Board", noted the researchers. An investigation at a radioactive waste management facility in Kuantan, run by Australian mining firm Lynas, found that the storage system there was inadequate and risked exposing workers to high radiation, among other lapses.

"The future implications this has for nuclear power plant development and the safe disposal of nuclear waste are significant," they said.

Southeast Asia is prone to natural disasters. This has been central to objections from Indonesians in areas where proposed reactors are to be built (in Central Java and in the Bangka-Belitung Province).

Anti-nuclear groups have noted that the country, sitting on the Pacific Ring of Fire, is vulnerable to earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions, even in areas the Indonesian government said are relatively safe from tectonic activity.

Prime Minister Lee has stressed the importance of nuclear security and safety to Singapore.

"We are small and densely-populated. Any nuclear or radiological incident would be a major disaster, perhaps an existential one," he said at the last NSS in 2014.

The National Research Foundation started a programme to train 100 nuclear experts in the next decade. These experts would, for example, be able to study the impact of radiation on Singapore in the event of a nuclear incident, so that the authorities can roll out precautionary measures. Experts would also be able to detect and trace

radioactive materials that could be used to make weapons. So far, only nine experts have been selected in the last two years.

While North Korea and its nuclear tests could dominate the discussions over the next few days, countries, including Singapore, will be delivering progress reports on nuclear security.

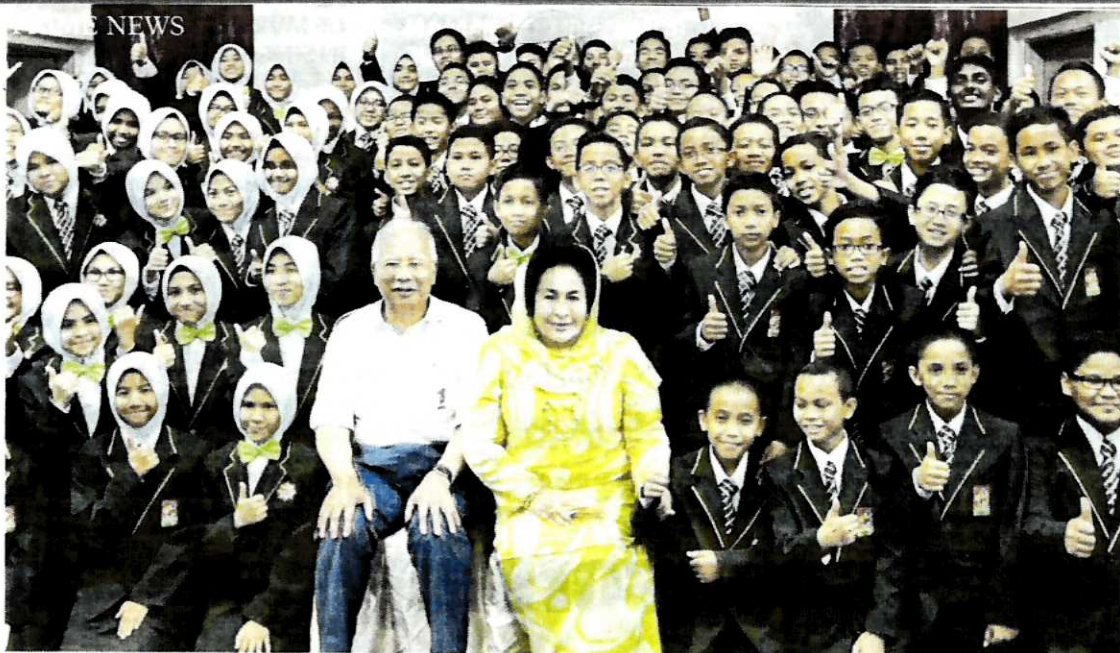
Also on the table are possible actions the international community can take to strengthen the global security architecture. With this NSS being the last — in tandem with the end of Obama's term as president — countries are expected to adopt a set of documents on the road ahead to key security initiatives. The fallout from a nuclear disaster does not stop at international boundaries. On a regional level, countries can come together and adopt a common position to promote nuclear safety and non-proliferation. And as the government ramps up the training of experts, the ordinary Singaporean will benefit from understanding the implications of nuclear power booming so close to our shores. — Today

Lin Yanqin is deputy news editor at Today.



Seven-year-old Wakana Kumagai visits the spot where her house, which was washed away by the March 11, 2011 tsunami, used to stand in Higashimatsushima, Fukushima. The incident exposed weaknesses in safety and security counter-measures at nuclear plants. — Picture by Reuters

KERATAN AKHBAR
NEW STRAITS TIMES (PRIME NEWS) : MUKA SURAT 2
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, with students of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia's Permata Insan programme at the Permata Insan College Complex in Nilai yesterday. Pic by Hazreen Mohamad

'Succeed by embracing knowledge'

CRIPPLING EFFECTS: Those who do not learn are doomed to become victims of ignorance, says Najib

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HISTORY has shown that the lack of knowledge can cripple a nation, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday.

He said without knowledge, one would not have the upper hand to defeat one's enemy.

Citing the defeat of the Malacca Sultanate to the Portuguese, he said

inferior weapons, such as spears, were used against the enemy, who had firearms.

"For us to succeed, we must embrace Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, master at least two languages and possess higher-order thinking skills," he said at the launch of the Permata Insan College Complex at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia here yesterday.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Minister in the Prime Minister's De-

partment Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, Usim chairman Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin and the university's vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Musa Ahmad.

Najib stressed the importance of learning from history.

He said the absence of knowledge would have crippling effects on the people, especially in their ability to differentiate between lies and truths in cyberspace.

With the influence of social media

and exposure to contemporary ills, such as drugs, illegal racing and the the Islamic State's ideology, he feared the people could become victims of their own ignorance.

Najib later toured the Permata Insan College built on a 4.6ha site at a cost of RM68 million.

Usim's Permata Insan programme is an expansion of the Permata programme under Rosmah's patronage.

Gifted children can only enter the programme if they pass a test ad-

ministered by Usim.

Currently, more than 100 students study integrated knowledge of *naqli* (revealed knowledge) and *aqli* (rational science) here.

Najib said it was timely for the country to churn out more young Malaysians who had *naqli* and *aqli* knowledge.

"We cannot separate the two, as Islam wants us to have both knowledge," he said, adding that *naqli* and *aqli* would make an individual well-rounded.