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TARIKH: 13 MEI 2016 (JUMAAT)

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Mosti Kenal Pasti 150 PPU Bagi 25 Institut Penyelidikan Seluruh Negara

KUALA LUMPUR, 12 Mei (Bernama) -- **Kementerian Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi (Mosti)** telah mengenal pasti 150 petunjuk prestasi utama (PPU) bagi 25 institusi penyelidikan di seluruh negara untuk mempercepatkan inovasi dan reka cipta baharu.

Menterinya **Datuk Seri Madius Tangau** berkata setiap institut penyelidikan diberikan minimum lima PPU untuk dilaksanakan sehingga akhir tahun.

PPU itu, katanya, sejajar dengan objektif yang digariskan dalam Tahun Pengkomersialan Malaysia 2016, dianjurkan bersama oleh Mosti dan Kementerian Kewangan.

"Sepanjang tahun, (mana-mana) inovasi dan reka cipta menarik akan diumumkan dan pengkomersialannya akan dipermudahkan," katanya pada sidang akhbar selepas pelancaran Pameran Reka Cipta dan Inovasi Antarabangsa Ke-27 (ITEX 2016), di sini, hari ini.

Pameran itu yang dianjurkan oleh Malaysian Invention and Design Society, menampilkan 1,000 reka cipta daripada peserta dari 22 negara termasuk China, Jerman, Indonesia, Iraq, Korea selatan, Poland, Russia dan Arab Saudi.

Mengenai rumusan pelan hala tuju bakat, Madius berkata pada mesyuarat sulung Majlis Sains Negara (NSC) baru-baru ini, diputuskan bahawa negara berdepan cabaran besar memandangkan bilangan pelajar yang mengambil jurusan sains semakin merosot.

Jumlahnya kini hanya 20 peratus berbanding sasaran negara untuk mencapai 40 hingga 60 peratus.

"NSC memutuskan satu strategi perlu dirangka (menerusi pelan hala tuju) dan Mosti dipertanggungjawabkan untuk mengetuai kerjasama dengan Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi," kata Madius.

Beliau berkata pelan hala tuju itu pada dasarnya akan mencari jalan untuk menggalakkan pelajar, pendidik, guru besar dan ibu bapa menguasai sains dan matematik, dengan harapan pelan itu akan dapat dibentangkan pada mesyuarat NSC yang berikutnya.

Dalam menangani pendidikan sains yang dianggap sebagai mata pelajaran yang sukar

dikuasai, Mosti bersama-sama dengan Kementerian Pendidikan akan memperkenalkan metodologi pembelajaran baharu yang berasaskan penyelidikan dan menggabungkan banyak aktiviti.

"Bermula daripada peringkat tadika hingga ke universiti, pembelajaran akan lebih menumpukan kepada teori dan mengurangkan syarahan, dan membanyakkan amali," katanya.

Menurutnya, metodologi pembelajaran itu dihasilkan oleh pemenang hadiah French Nobel Laureate.

Beliau berkata metodologi itu telah menjalani ujian di lima sekolah rendah di Kuala Lumpur dan juga dilaksanakan di sekolah terpilih di Sabah, Kedah dan Terengganu.

"Sekolah yang mencatatkan prestasi rendah juga ditanda aras berbanding sekolah yang mencatatkan prestasi cemerlang. Keputusan awal menunjukkan menerusi metodologi pembelajaran baharu itu, sekolah yang mencatatkan prestasi rendah mencatatkan keputusan lebih baik berbanding sekolah cemerlang.

"Dengan metodologi itu, kami berharap kami dapat meningkatkan bilangan pelajar yang mengambil jurusan sains," kata Madius.

ITEX 2016, yang berlangsung 12-14 Mei di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur terbuka kepada orang ramai.

-- BERNAMA



Work On MPAS' RM2.2 Billion Phosphate Complex to Start In 2018

KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Phosphates Additive (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd (MPAS) has signed an Engineering Design, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract with a consortium of contractors from China to build a RM2.2 billion integrated phosphate complex in Sarawak.

The project, slated for the Samalaju Industrial Park in Bintulu, is expected to get off the ground in the first quarter of 2018 and set for completion at end-2018, MPAS Managing Director Lim Lee Wan said.

The project, which will be built on a 141.63-hectare site, will be financed 70 per cent from loans and the rest from shareholders (equity)," he told reporters following the signing ceremony of the EPC contract here Thursday.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by **Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau.**

MPAS is a 100 per cent Malaysian joint venture Company between Cahya Mata Sarawak Bhd's subsidiary, Samalaju Industries Sdn Bhd, Malaysian Phosphate Venture Sdn Bhd, and Tradewinds Plantation Bhd's subsidiary, Arif Enigma Sdn Bhd.

Khazanah National Bhd's subsidiary, Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) holds a 40 per cent equity stake in MPAS.

Lim said MPAS has a phosphate plant on a 2.02-hectare site at the Lumut Port, which produces about 30,000 tonne of phosphates a year.

The new plant in Bintulu will have an annual capacity of 500,000 tonne of food, feed and fertiliser phosphates, making it the largest in Southeast Asia, he said, adding that it would also produce 100,000 tonne of ammonia and 900,000 tonne of coke.

"Phosphates are essential human, animal and plant growth ingredients. Our products are feed stocks for the manufacture of food salts, animals and fertilisers, an integral part of food supply chains.

"The project will ensure the availability, affordability, competitiveness and sustainability of the agrofood industry in the country," he said.

In his speech, Madius said the Bintulu phosphate complex would enable Malaysia to reduce imports of phosphate and expand the production of animal feed and fertilisers.

He said the plant would create 1,200 jobs once it begin operations, while other supporting businesses and industries would also have spillover effects such as ports and logistics.

Citing a Frost Sullivan report, he said the project total economic contribution is estimated at RM12.9 billion, of which RM1.1 billion would be tax revenue while the balance to gross national income.

Madius said the project would also create RM4.7 billion in terms of domestic direct investment and foreign direct investment.

He said the project also signified the success of commercialisation of research and development by MPAS, which was initially funded by MTDC and now evolved into a multi-billion ringgit company.

-- BERNAMA



Mosti Identifies 150 KPIs For 25 Research Institutes Nationwide

KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- **The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti)** has identified 150 key performance indicators (KPIs) for its 25 research institutes nationwide to fast-track new innovations and inventions.

Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau said each research institute had been given a minimum of five KPIs to implement by year-end.

The KPIs, he said, are in line with the objectives set out in the Malaysia Commercialisation Year 2016, jointly organised by Mosti and the Finance Ministry.

"As we go through the year, (any) interesting innovations and inventions will be announced and their commercialisation facilitated," he told reporters at a press conference after the launch of the 27th International Invention and Innovation Exhibition (ITEX 2016), here today.

Organised by the Malaysian Invention and Design Society, the exhibition features 1,000 inventions with participants from 22 countries, including China, Germany, Indonesia, Iraq, South Korea, Poland, Russia and Saudi Arabia.

On the formulation of a talent roadmap, Madius said at the recent inaugural meeting of the National Science Council (NSC), it was determined that there is a big challenge to the country in respect of the number of students taking up science having declined tremendously.

It is now at only 20 per cent as opposed to the nation's target of achieving 40 to 60 per cent.

"The NSC decided that a strategy should be drawn (via the roadmap) and Mosti was given the task to lead in collaboration with the Education Ministry (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education," Madius said.

He said the roadmap would essentially look into ways of encouraging students, educators, headmasters and parents on science and mathematics, with the hope that a plan can be tabled at the subsequent meeting of the NSC.

In tackling science education which has been perceived as a subject that is hard to master, Mosti together with the MoE, will introduce a new learning methodology which is

inquiry-based and incorporates a lot of activities.

"Starting from kindergarten up to university, there will be less lecture and theory, and a lot of practicals," said Madius.

He added that the learning methodology was derived from a French Nobel Laureate prize winner.

He said it had been undergoing trials in five primary schools in Kuala Lumpur and also implemented at selected schools in Sabah, Kedah and Terengganu.

"Low performing schools were benchmarked against excellent performers. Initial results showed via the new learning methodology, the low performing schools did better compared to the latter.

"With the methodology, we hope we can increase the number of students taking science," Madius added.

ITEX 2016, from May 12-14 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, is open to the general public.

-- BERNAMA

KERATAN AKHBAR
THE STAR (NATION) : MUKA SURAT 24
TARIKH : 13 MEI 2016 (JUMAAT)

Cloud seeding still on despite the rain

KUALA LUMPUR: Strange as it may sound, cloud seeding is still being carried out by the Government to fill dams around the country despite the recent heavy downpour.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Madius Tangau said the current wet spell was not going to last and it was a case of making rain while there were clouds in the sky.

He said water levels at the dams were adversely affected by the dry weather due to the El Nino phenomenon.

"We have been greatly assisted by nature. There have been rains here and there," he said after the launch of the 27th International Invention and Innovation Exhibition (ITEX16).

He pointed out that the current inter-monsoon rains will cease by the end of the month and will be followed by the normal dry period from June to September.

He said the next opportunity for cloud seeding would be in October.

"So that's why we are trying to maximize rain harvesting this month until our dams are full," he said.



Hazardous situation: An aerial picture showing thick smoke rising from the open burning in Riau recently. — EPA

Siap sedia hadapi kemungkinan

➔ Purata
taburan
hujan diramal
antara 600
hingga 700mm

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► Kuala Lumpur

Model ramalan cuaca setakat bulan ini menjangkakan kebarangkalian berlaku fenomena La Nina yang menyebabkan hujan melebihi paras normal adalah pada kadar 60 peratus.

Timbalan Ketua Pengarah (Operasi) Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia, Alui Bahari, berkata model ramalan cuaca itu dikemas kini setiap bulan bagi memastikan persediaan berseesuaian dapat diadakan untuk menghadapi sebarang kemungkinan.

Beliau berkata, jika ramalan menunjukkan keputusan sebaliknya, cuaca akan kembali seperti biasa iaitu musim tengkujuh yang lazimnya melanda negeri di Pantai Timur pada Disember.

"Berdasarkan rekod pusat kaji cuaca nasional, musim tengkujuh mencatatkan purata taburan hujan antara 600 hingga 700 milimeter (mm).

"Berbanding fenomena La Nina, taburan hujan akan melebihi kadar berkenaan sehingga mencekaskan banjir di beberapa negeri Pantai Timur," katanya ketika di-

hubungi BH, semalam.

Mengulas kebarangkalian kesan sederhana jerebu disebabkan hujan melebihi paras normal daripada fenomena La Nina, Alui berkata, situasi itu tertakluk kepada beberapa faktor.

Katanya, taburan hujan ketika monsun barat daya lazimnya lebih kurang berbanding biasa, sekali gus menyumbang kepada kebarangkalian berlaku kebakaran terutama di kawasan tanah gambut.

"Jika taburan hujan melebihi paras biasa sepanjang Jun hingga Oktober, kesan jerebu rentas sempadan disebabkan negara jiran boleh berkurangan," katanya.

Jumlah aset mencukupi

Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim, ketika dihubungi menjelaskan jumlah aset setakat ini mencukupi untuk berdepan keadaan terburuk, termasuk banjir disebabkan fenomena La Nina.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, Agensi Pengurusan Bencana Negara (APBN) dan sekretariat peringkat daerah serta negeri diselia Jabatan Pertahanan Awam akan terus melakukan pemantauan bagi memastikan aspek pengurusan ketika banjir digerakkan secepat mungkin.

"Makanan dan kelengkapan bersesuaian untuk bekalan ketika banjir akan diagihkan mengikut perkembangan semasa bagi memastikan sampai ke golongan sasaran.

"Prosedur operasi standard (SOP) dan kerangka pengurusan banjir tidak berubah walaupun APBN mengambil alih tugas daripada Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) sejak tahun lalu," katanya.



Terjadi apabila suhu permukaan laut di kawasan Khatulistiwa, terutama tengah dan timur Lautan Pasifik menjadi lebih rendah berbanding biasa

Jumlah titik panas dari Januari hingga April 2016



Deen: Grafik BH



➔ Berita banjir di Kuala Lumpur Ms 36/37

Firefighters gearing up for floods

By Jasmine Andria
and Loghun Kumaran
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PETALING JAYA — From the burning heat to heavy rainfall, the Fire and Rescue Department is now faced with another challenge as La Nina kicks in.

However, the department is well versed with the difficulties ahead, having faced a similar situation during the end of 2014.

"There were serious floods then as well. We have gone through this before and we are prepared," said Fire and Rescue Department deputy-general Datuk Wan Mohd Nor Ibrahim.

He said the department was making plans to allocate assets and personnel in areas with high probability of floods.

"We will monitor the areas and transfer our assets accordingly to places that

are more prone to severe floods. Our personnel will also be moved to assist in these areas," he said.

"The Meteorological Department will give us the forecast days or weeks ahead for us to be prepared."

Mohd Nor said the department would work closely with other government agencies, including the police and Welfare Department to establish a proper plan.

In Ipoh, the Perak Fire and Rescue Department is prepared to face the possible occurrence of transboundary haze.

State director Datuk Yahaya Madis said the department had learned valuable lessons from previous haze incidents.

Yahaya said the worst hot spell in Perak was in 2014, where several man-made fires contributed to hazy conditions.

"Our studies showed that many fires were caused by human activity and started out as smaller fires. They could have been controlled if we tackled them earlier," he

said at a blood donation drive organised in conjunction with the state-level World Firefighters' Day yesterday.

"We will be more prepared this year by organising patrols to locate and put out small fires before they spread."

On Wednesday, Natural Resource and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said Malaysia was expected to experience transboundary haze from June to October following a spell of hot and dry weather in Sumatra and Kalimantan.

Wan Junaidi had noted that the haze might be moderate, as the La Nina phenomenon — which would bring rain to some parts of the peninsula — was expected to occur at around the same time.

In the event of heavy rain, Yahaya also advised the public to be wary when visiting recreational areas near rivers or waterfalls.

More rainfall and thunderstorms in the afternoons, says Met Dept

PETALING JAYA — Malaysians have little to worry about over the current rainy days.

Meteorological Department director-general Datuk Che Gayah Ismail said rainfall nationwide, with the exception of Sarawak and Selangor, was slightly below normal.

"Despite having constant thunderstorms, there isn't much change to the amount of rainfall we expect each year," she said.

"Only Sarawak is seeing a slight increase in rainfall while Selangor is receiving the normal amount."

West coast states in the peninsula are forecast to experience rain or thunderstorms in the afternoons.

Thunderstorms are expected to hit Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, George Town, Ipoh, Seremban and Malacca in the coming week.

She added that the country was still in the El Nino phase, which was expected to peak by the end of May.

"We are currently facing a transitional monsoon phase or inter monsoon. We will see more rainfall and thunderstorms in most areas in the country in the afternoons and gradually reduce the effects of El Nino," she said.

"The weather is expected to return to normal by June and transit to the La Nina phenomenon.

"Despite many of our prediction modules showing 70 per cent chances that the country will be facing La Nina, it is not certain. So, all we can do at the moment is update our predictions on a monthly basis," she added.

"Even if it does occur, Malaysians can expect slightly above average rainfall nationwide under manageable circumstances."

Water woes continue despite downpour

By Dan Guen Chin
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JOHOR BARU — The water situation in and around Johor Baru is not getting any better despite the continuous heavy rain in the past three days.

As rain continued to fall over Johor Baru late yesterday for almost an hour, public works, rural and regional development committee chairman Datuk Hasni Mohammad said water rationing for areas in and around Johor Baru and Pasir Gudang could be introduced by the end of the month.

This was because water at the Congok Dam in Mersing could only last two weeks at the very most, if the dry

spell continues.

"We know we have rain in Johor Baru and the outlying areas over the past three days and more rain is expected. But the rain is not falling over the areas where we want it, like the catchment areas and over the dams," he said.

Hasni said the state was looking into hiring companies to carry out cloud seeding instead of relying solely on the Meteorological Department.

"A budget of RM300,000 has already been set aside by the state government for cloud seeding operations and hopefully, we get the desired results," he said.

Congok Dam in Mersing supplies some 8,167 households, or an estimated 46,8000 people, with water daily.

The water level at the dam as of

yesterday was at 3.9m.

It was 4.2m on May 3 when members of the National Water Service Commission (SPAN) visited the dam.

"The water level there has been receding every day and if the decline continues, there will be no more water to draw from the Congok Dam within two weeks."

Hasni said unless the current dry spell eases, water rationing would be inevitable.

"Syarikat Air Johor (SAJ) tells me the areas of Johor Baru, Pasir Gudang, Kota Tinggi and Mersing, affecting some 885,000 people, would have to undergo water rationing, if there is no improvement until the end of the month," he said.

Water rationing has already been implemented by Syarikat Air Johor, the state water concessionaire, with the

approval of SPAN in certain areas in the districts of Mersing and Kota Tinggi since April 20 and will continue until May 15.

Syarikat Air Johor production and distribution manager Elias Ismail said water rationing may be implemented for households that rely on the Sungei Layang dam in Kota Tinggi.

"The water level at the Sungei Layang dam is at 19.35m, below the critical level of 23.5m. At the rate the water level is receding, at about 0.03m per day, we will face a critical situation within two weeks," he said.

"Once the water level reaches 19m, we have to impose water rationing, just like last year, unless we have continuous rain over the area."

BiotechCorp aims to boost Malaysia's bioeconomy

SHAREN KAUR

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Biotechnology Corp Sdn Bhd (BiotechCorp), the agency tasked with driving biotechnology forward in Malaysia, aims to bring the nation's bioeconomy on par with other global advanced economies.

Bioeconomy refers to the set of economic activities based on processes using biological sources to generate sustainable economic, social and environmental development.

Malaysia is the second in Asia after China and the first country in Asean to establish its own national bioeconomy initiative.

As the first Asean country to establish its own bioeconomy agenda, Malaysia plays a leading role in driving the bioeconomy in the region, said BiotechCorp chief executive officer Datuk Dr Mohd Nazlee Kamal.

He said it shows the foresight of

the government in capitalising on the country's rich biodiversity and natural resources to develop the bioeconomy initiatives as part of the nation's economic transformation strategies.

Bioeconomy will be a significant contributor to the Malaysia's economy by 2020 and beyond as it has the potential to make the country more competitive internationally.

Nazlee said it could also enhance food security and affordable healthcare, and create greener economy as the country shifts towards a low-carbon economy.

The Malaysian bioeconomy sector is projected to grow to RM149.1 billion in 2020 and RM181.2 billion in 2030, respectively.

As of last year, bioeconomy as a whole is estimated at 11.3 per cent of the total Malaysian gross domestic product, a contribution equivalent to RM131 billion.