

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## Plans activated to fight haze

### DoE to coordinate measures in bid to clear unhealthy air

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The National Open Burning Action Plan and the National Haze Action Plan have been activated to coordinate measures by government agencies in addressing open burning and the haze in the country.

This was done as the air quality reached a hazardous level in Miri and a very unhealthy level in Kuala Baram, both places in Sarawak, over the past two days, said Department of Environment (DoE) director-general Norlin Jaafar.

"We have also issued directives under Section 31 and Section 37 of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 to all landowners in the peat soil areas of Kuala Baram to prevent and control fires there.

"Also, we have been conducting daily patrols in areas at risk of open burning as well as providing the Air Pollution Index (API) readings to the Sarawak state disaster management committee for further action," she said here yesterday.

Norlin explained that several measures had been taken to address the haze in Sarawak, including stepping up enforcement against open burning and other activities that can aggravate the situation.

In addition, the department is working with other agencies to implement the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on preventing and controlling fires on peat soil and disseminating information, she said. Norlin said she hoped that all



**Air quality in jeopardy:** A firefighter at the scene of a peat fire measuring about six hectares near Taman Kopodim in Matang, Kuching. — ZULAZHAR SHEBLEE / The Star

stakeholders and landowners can closely monitor fire-prone areas such as landfills, forests, peat soil areas as well as agricultural and industrial land.

"The people are reminded to not carry out open burning which will affect the air quality. The DoE will take stern action against those caught for open burning under Section 29 (A) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974," she added.

As at noon yesterday, the air quality in Miri was at a hazardous level of 344 at the Industrial Training

Institute API station while the reading at the Sekolah Kebangsaan Kuala Baram 2 API station was at a very unhealthy 297.

An API level of between 51 and 100 indicates air quality that is moderate; between 101 and 200, unhealthy; between 201 and 300, very unhealthy; and above 300, hazardous.

The air quality in Sri Aman, Sarawak, was at the unhealthy level and that in Sibul at the moderate level between 4am and noon.

In Sabah, the air quality was at

the moderate level in Sandakan, Kota Kinabalu, Komanis and Keningau and in the Federal Territory of Labuan yesterday afternoon.

The DoE website showed the API for Sandakan as 55; Komanis, 56; Keningau, 58; Kota Kinabalu, 60; and Labuan, 69.

The people can surf the DoE website at <http://apims.doe.gov.my/v2/> for the API readings. They can also download the smartphone application, MyIPU, on Google Play for the readings. — Bernama

## Van driver nabbed for alleged molestation

**KOTA KINABALU:** A van driver has been detained for allegedly molesting a Japanese tourist here.

City police chief Asst Comm Habibi Majinji said the tourist had hired the van to take her to the city mosque for a visit on Sunday afternoon.

He said the woman, in her 40s, boarded the same van after the visit and asked the driver to send her back to the bus terminal in the city, adding that the driver then asked the woman to sit in the front passenger's seat.

ACP Habibi said the woman and the driver were alone in the vehicle at the time.

"When they reached the Bukit Bendera area, the driver allegedly started groping the woman's private parts and hugged her," he said.

ACP Habibi added that the woman tried fighting him off but he allegedly went on groping her breasts and private parts.

The driver then stopped the van by the side of the road and tried to molest her further but the woman was already screaming for help at this point. The driver let her off the van and sped off.

"The victim asked for help from the public and they took her to lodge a police report," he said.

The driver was arrested in Jalan Sulaman, near here, at about 10.30pm on the same day.