

# KERATAN AKHBAR

NAMA AKHBAR: THE STAR (NATION)

TARIKH: 16 OGOS 2019

MUKA SURAT: 12



Hard at work: Firefighters carrying 365m-long rolls of hose to put out the peat fire at Taman Kopodim in Matang, Kuching. (Top) A firefighter doing overhaul works while putting out the peat fire at Taman Kopodim.

Watch the video  
[thestartv.com](http://thestartv.com)



## Race against time in Sarawak

### Dept going all out to douse fires before schools reopen

**KUCHING:** The Sarawak Fire and Rescue Department hopes to put out forest and peat fires, especially those in the Kuala Baram area near Miri before schools reopen on Monday.

Its director Khirudin Drahman said ongoing firefighting efforts by the department and other agencies were helped by scattered rain the last few days.

"I've given instructions for a total knockout operation. We will try our best this Thursday, Friday and Saturday to put out the fires before the school holiday ends.

"There are a few schools in Kuala Baram and it will be a problem for them," Khirudin told reporters after closing the department's innovative and creative group convention here yesterday.

Peat fires have been raging in Kuala Baram since the beginning of the month, causing air quality in the area to hit hazardous levels the past week.

However, the air pollutant index (API) at the Miri Industrial Training Institute station in Kuala Baram improved to 217 at 2pm yesterday, compared to a high of 405 at 1am.

“We cannot bring our heavy vehicles, so we have to walk (to the burning area).”

**Khirudin Drahman**

A reading above 300 is considered hazardous, while 201-300 is “very unhealthy”.

Khirudin said a Bombardier aircraft deployed by the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency arrived yesterday to carry out water bombing in Kuala Baram.

He said most of the ground in the area was soft, posing a challenge to firefighters.

“We cannot bring our heavy vehicles, so we have to walk. With the help of helicopters and the plane, I hope that the fire can be tackled,” said Khirudin.

According to the department, firefighting resumed yesterday to target the remaining 14ha of peat fires in Kuala Baram, as well as in other parts of the state.