



'Haze affecting Malaysia, other countries likely from Indonesia'

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asean Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) has maintained that the source of the transboundary haze affecting Malaysia and several countries is likely to have originated from Indonesia.

ASMC, in a statement on its website, said satellite images showed that forest fires in Sumatra and Riau had intensified in the last few days, leading to a build-up of moderate to dense haze.

It said the haze was likely to continue to affect parts of the southern Asean region, including Sarawak in Malaysia and Singapore.

The haze, it said, was expected to continue due to the dry weather, with extensive smoke in many areas.

"Persistent hotspots were detected in central and southern Sumatra, and this led to a build-up of moderate to dense smoke haze.

"Some smoke haze has been blown to Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore. In Kalimantan, moderate to dense smoke haze continued to emanate from persistent hotspot clusters in south, central and west Kalimantan.

"Blown by the prevailing winds, some of the haze has been transported to western Sarawak and the adjacent South China Sea. For the next few days, generally dry conditions are forecast to prevail over the southern Asean region, while hotspot

activities are expected to persist and may worsen," it said.

ASMC said dry weather would persist in the coming weeks, which meant further deterioration in transboundary haze was expected.

ASMC refuted Indonesian Environmental Affairs and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar's statement on Sept 8 that Malaysia's haze was not from the republic.

She was quoted as saying the number of hotspots in Indonesia had seen a downward trend.

"It has been ascertained that until now, there has been no transboundary haze from Indonesia to neighbouring countries."

The Malaysian Meteorological Department had maintained that the haze in the country occurred after there was an increase in hotspots in Sumatra and Kalimantan, and the haze was expected to continue until the southwest monsoon period ended late this month or early next month.

On Sept 6, the government said it would send a diplomatic note to Indonesia to request immediate action to put out forest fires.

Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin said the government would assist Indonesia to put out forest fires.