

## Penang hits 253, just 48 shy of becoming haze-zardous

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GEORGE TOWN: All lectures, tutorials and outdoor activities at Universiti Sains Malaysia's (USM) main campus in Minden, here, have been cancelled following the worsening haze.

As of 1pm, the Air Pollutant Index (API) in Minden was at a very unhealthy level at 223 while Balik Pulau recorded an even higher API at 253.

The API reading at Seberang Jaya and Seberang Prai on the mainland was at 172 and 180 respectively.

USM, in its Facebook page, said office operations, however, continued as usual.

"All students and staff are urged to abide by the university's haze management standard operating procedure."

Earlier today, all schools on the island were ordered to close after the API breached the very unhealthy level.

In the southwest district, a total 51 schools were affected, while in the northeast district, 11 schools.

An announcement on the closure was made using the speakers at Masjid Jamek Sungai Rusa in Balik Pulau.

Meanwhile, three flights heading to Penang were diverted due to low visibility at the Penang International Airport.

Today is the first for Penang hitting very unhealthy API levels since the haze made a nationwide comeback.

State Environment Committee chairman Phee Boon Poh said the order for closure of schools in the southwest district was issued at 7.20am today.

"As for schools in the northeast district, they were closed from noon onwards.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and doing the needful," he said.