

Water bombing operation to put out forest, peatland fires in Sri Aman successfully carried out

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MMEA Bombardier CL-415 dumps water scooped from the Baram River on the burning peat soil. – File photo

KUCHING: A water bombing operation using the Bombardier CL-415 aircraft by Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) to put out forest and peatland fires in Sri Aman has been successfully carried out, says Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas.

According to him, the aircraft successfully collected water from Sungai Lingga ten times and sprayed some 60,000 litres of water at the burning areas of Kampung STC in Sri Aman.

“Today’s operation which started at 8.15am before ending at 12.15pm was successful. It will more or less help in putting out the forest fires and lowering the Air Pollutant Index (API).

“I would like to congratulate all the agencies who have been working hard in putting out the fire and carrying out cloud seeding operations particularly Bomba, MMEA, Malaysian Meteorological Department, Royal Malaysian Air Force, Malaysian Civil Defence Force (APM), Malaysian Armed Forces, Kuching Water Board, Public Works Department, Department of Irrigation and Drainage, police and Sri Aman resident,” he said in a statement today.

Uggah, who is also State Disaster Management Committee (JPBN) chairman, pointed out that the same operation was carried out from Sept 18 to 21 but was unsuccessful as the aircraft could not carry out water scooping.

He said one of the reasons which caused the failure of the operation was due to fishing nets found at the initial identified location for water scooping and that the locals did not give their cooperation in removing the nets.

Apart from that, there were also suspicious objects found in the river which caused the operation to be ceased as it might be risky for the aircraft and its crew.

He also noted that Bomba later conducted an investigation on this and found that the suspicious objects were spikes (pancang) that could not be removed.

As of 8am today, three hotspots have been detected in Sri Aman, four in Miri and 332 in Kalimantan.

The air quality in Sri Aman has continue to plummet despite a brief improvement when its Air Pollutant Index (API) reading dropped to 104 at 7pm last night.

As of 3pm, it’s API has breached a “very unhealthy” level of 205