

Riau declares haze emergency

M'sia to evacuate students after API hits 600 in Indonesian province



Toxic haze: Indonesian firefighters battling a forest fire in Kampar, Riau.
— AFP

PUTRAJAYA: The government will evacuate 280 students in Pekanbaru and Jambi in Indonesia after a state of emergency was declared in Riau due to the haze.

According to the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma), 183 of the students are in Pekanbaru while the rest are in Jambi.

The agency said 160 students would be brought back to Malaysia while 120 would be evacuated to

the Malaysia Hall in Jakarta.

Nadma, Wisma Putra, the Royal Malaysian Air Force and other related agencies met yesterday to discuss the evacuation operations.

Riau governor Syamsuar had declared a state of emergency beginning Monday until Oct 31 and it might be extended if the air pollution situation does not improve.

As of Monday, the visibility range

in the areas was 500m with the Pollution Standards Index (PSI) at 600.

On the haze situation in Malaysia, Nadma said it was improving following the transition phase of the monsoon, which began yesterday and would continue until early November.

It said the transition phase meant that the southwest wind, which previously blew from the neighbouring

country to Malaysia, would slowly change direction, and the condition here would improve.

As at 8am, 24 locations recorded an Air Pollutant Index (API) in the unhealthy range and 44 locations at a moderate level.

An API reading of between 0 and 50 is categorised as good; 51-100 (moderate); 101 to 200 (unhealthy); 201 to 300 (very unhealthy); and above 300 (hazardous). — Bernama