



KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	STARMETRO			
TARIKH	:	13/3/2021	MUKA SURAT	:	4
JABATAN	:	JPSM			
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN			

JOHOR

Star Metro 13/3/2021 m/s 4

100,000 trees to be planted this year

State's green initiative addresses rising temperatures in Malaysian cities highlighted by study

By MOHD FARHAAN SHAH
farhaan@thestar.com.my

PLANTING a million trees by 2025 is Johor's green initiative to help address climate change.

"We hope to start the ball rolling by planting 100,000 trees in 2021 through local councils in major cities and towns such as Johor Baru, Iskandar Puteri, Pasir Gudang and Kulai," said state executive councillor Ayub Jamil.

He was asked to comment on a study by Think City, which said many Malaysian cities including Johor Baru had become significantly hotter over the years.

The state government, through Johor Corporation, will also be setting up a special fund to encourage the public to plant trees.

Ayub said RM700,000 had been allocated under the state Budget 2021 for the green initiative.

Meanwhile, Johor Health Department director Datuk Dr Aman Rabu urged people to take precautionary measures during the present dry and hot spell.

This includes spending more time indoors and limiting outdoor activities.

"Drink more water and consume less caffeine, soda and alcoholic beverages, wear light coloured clothes and use a hat or umbrella to shield yourself from the sun.

"Use fans and air-conditioning to keep cool and do not stay inside a vehicle for too long without turning the air-conditioning on," he said.

With the country still facing the

Covid-19 pandemic, Dr Aman advised those with symptoms such as cough, flu or asthma to immediately seek medical treatment.

The Think City study, which looked at Kuala Lumpur city centre, Bayan Lepas and George Town in Penang, Johor Baru as well as Ipoh in Perak, saw peak temperatures rising by between 1.64°C and 6.75°C.

Think City's Dr Ceelia Leong said while comparisons of temperature within each city were carried out across different time frames, and each terrain had unique geographical characteristics that influenced the temperature, a consistent increase across all five locations was observed.

The rise in temperature in urban areas had been linked primarily to the urban heat island effect, a lack of greenery and global warming, said the geospatial analyst.

The urban heat island effect occurs when a city experiences much warmer temperatures than surrounding rural areas, with the difference in temperature between urban and less-developed areas linked to how much solar radiation the surfaces in each environment absorb and retain heat.

At 6.75°C, Ipoh registered the highest increase in temperature within a 21-year period, from November 1998 to March 2019.

Johor Baru registered a 6.70°C change in temperature within 13 years, George Town 6.37°C within a 32-year period, while Bayan Lepas registered a 5.63°C change within 32 years.

Surprisingly, Kuala Lumpur only recorded a 1.64°C increase between December 1989 and October 2019.

"Compared to other Malaysian cities, Kuala Lumpur city centre has been able to demonstrate the efficiency of its domestic gardens, parks and woodlands," said the study, which used satellite imagery to map the extent of the heat island effect in the cities and to observe changes over the past few decades.

The increase in Ipoh's temperature was attributed to its ecological change and urban trends, while the rise in Johor Baru was attributed to rapid gentrification as well as increased economic corridors and the number of industries.

George Town's temperature increase was attributed to the immense traction in businesses and hospitality services while Bayan Lepas experienced a rise in temperature because of the growth in industries and urbanisation.

Leong said the urban heat island effect was caused by the types of materials used in cities such as concrete and bitumen, which absorbed and re-emitted the sun's heat more than natural landscapes.

"Two characteristics were clearly evident.

"Firstly, Malaysian cities are getting hotter due to the increasing intensity of development, which is compounded by the effects of climate change.

"Secondly, urban greening had beneficial impacts, with the ability to lower urban temperatures between two and eight degrees Celsius," she said.