

SNAKES, PETS AND HEATWAVE

24 April 2016

- Detikdaily



By Eddie Hoo

Snakes are being forced out of their habitats due to the current spell of extreme weather. On top of that, the haze has returned to the Klang Valley. However, this time we can't blame Indonesia for the acrid smell of burning and the skies being shrouded in a grey midst.

Searing heat and a prolonged dry spell have led to open fires in several states. Bush fires and parched padi fields can be spotted in Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Malacca, Perak and Kedah along the NS Highway.

In Butterworth, 3,925 farmers in Seberang Perai Utara will use the dry planting method for planting padi which requires less water. They will start doing that on 6,731 hectares of padi fields from May 10.

The Chuping Meteorological Station in Perlis recorded a temperature reading of over 37 °C two days ago due to the hot weather caused by the El Nino phenomenon. Temperatures exceeded 37°C for more than three days in Perlis and Pahang, forcing schools there to close on Friday.

Of late, an alarming number of snakes were caught inside homes, buildings and close to human dwellings. In the last two months, the Civil Defence Department recorded a total of 3,780 cases of snakes caught close to human dwellings in March and 3,708 cases in February nationwide. The Fire and Rescue has recorded 973 cases in March and 899 cases in February nationwide.

According to Malay daily Sinar Harian, an eight-year-old girl was bitten by a snake at SK Chembong in Rembau when she was playing in the school field. On Tuesday, seven-year-old

Nuri Nadirah Ruslan from SK Datuk Hashim 1, in Pengkalan Chepa Kelantan, died after a snake-bite.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak herpetologist Prof Dr Indraneil Das advised the public to take a photo of the snake in the event of a snake-bite. A photo taken with a smart phone will suffice. This is to identify the type of snake, determine whether it is venomous or not, and document the case carefully.

He said images and case history sent by the attending physician to the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre can help a team of specialists to identify the species and suggest appropriate anti-venom serum and specific medical assistance.

Extreme heat can kill by pushing the human body beyond its limits. These are some tips on getting through the heatwave.

1. Ventilate your homes with box and ceiling fans. Open doors and turn fans on to push out hot air in the morning. When the sun is up, close all doors and windows. Draw all curtains and blinds to try shut out the heat.
2. Cool down with wet towels on your heads or shoulders. Soak feet or splash water on them occasionally. Take three showers a day if needed.
3. Stay downstairs if you are in a double-story house during the day.
4. Drink enough water and electrolyte replacement drinks to prevent dehydration.
5. Avoid alcoholic beverages and caffeine which act as diuretics.
6. Avoid large protein-rich meals that boost metabolic heat.

Like snakes, our pets also suffer too when it gets too hot. A shower will help to help canines to cope with the heat. Hot asphalt can burn your pets' paws, so walk your dogs on the grass if possible.

In the case of cats, ensure sufficient drinking water and allow them access to bathrooms or other cool spots where they can sleep during the hottest time of the day. Brush furry cats as a well-groomed, tangle-free coat will help keep the feline cool.