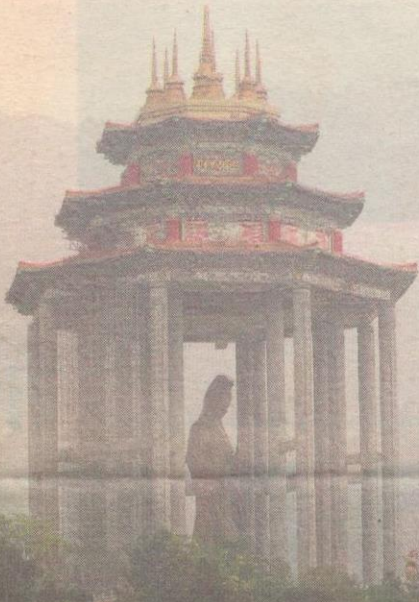


# Air quality worsens in northern states

Folk in Penang and Kedah worry about their health

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**Blurry view:** The haze condition in Ayer Itam, Penang at 12.30pm.

By **HAFIZ MARZUKHI, ANDREA FILMER** and **EMBUN MAJID**  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**GEORGE TOWN:** Residents in Kedah and Penang are getting worried for their health after the air quality in the states began to worsen since last week.

Checks revealed that the number of hotspots in Sumatra had increased by three-folds which contributed to the haze in the two states.

The Air Pollutant Index (API) readings surpassed 100 at the start of the day while the mainland side of Penang was getting closer to the dreaded mark.

A check with the Department of Environment website revealed that the API readings in Alor Setar was 108 at 11am compared to 104 at 7am.



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The Universiti Sains Malaysia station on the island recorded an API reading of 76 at 7am before rising to 78 at 11am yesterday.

In Bayan Lepas, visibility was at 4km from 7am and held steady throughout the day.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng called on the Department of Environment (DOE) to act against those who are found to conduct open burning.

Penang Health, Welfare, Caring Society and Environment chairman Phee Boon Poh advised the public to

be careful of acid rain since the weather forecast showed that Penang would be facing rainy days in isolated areas starting from today and would continue throughout the week.

Meanwhile, DOE said the number of hotspots in Sumatra had increased from 88 on Friday to 239 on Saturday.

It attributed the situation to the uncontrolled open burning in central Sumatra.

This had resulted in the haze crossing the border and causing the air quality in the west coast of the peninsula to deteriorate, it said in a statement.

The department said three areas with unhealthy API levels were Port Klang, with a reading at 117 as at 11am, followed by Alor Setar (108) and Kangar (103).