

MCO breathes new life into the environment

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Picture used for representational purposes

KUALA LUMPUR: The implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) due to the Covid-19 pandemic has not only brought about a new normal in the lives of the people, but it has also breathed new life into the environment.

Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) Faculty of Civil Engineering Technology senior lecturer Dr Nurul Nadrah Aqilah Tukimat said the MCO had indirectly led to a positive effect on the rate of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions to the global climate system.

She said this was due to human activities, which contributed to the release of carbon dioxide, like vehicle smoke and industrial activities, which were the second highest contributors of carbon dioxide in Malaysia at 23%.

According to her, the average reading of the Air Pollution Index (API) now was less than 60, while the readings in Kuantan (Pahang), Tanjung Malim (Perak), Paka (Terengganu), Alor Setar (Kedah), Kangar (Perlis) and several areas in Sarawak were below 50, which was good.

“The reduction in the greenhouse gas emission rate during the MCO has given the climate system a chance to breathe and recover,” she told Bernama today.

Meanwhile, commenting on how clear the river water was in the Klang Valley - like at Sungai Gombak, Sungai Way and Sungai Kemuning - after the MCO, Faculty of Environment Studies senior lecturer Dr Mohd Yusoff Ishak said this showed that there were activities which had contributed to the river waters becoming murky prior to that.

The Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) lecturer said among the activities which could have contributed to that were land development works and release of waste discharge from drains that flowed straight into the rivers.

He added that to maintain the positive impact on the environment, the public should continue to practise the new normal, such as reducing the use personal vehicles, not releasing wastes directly into rivers as well as to stop disrupting the ecosystem.

Actress and environmental activist Maya Karin, when contacted, felt that the challenge after this was to maintain the cleanliness of the rivers after the MCO.

"Don't be too happy, instead let this be a lesson for everyone ... maybe we can remind our children, for example, to always keep our rivers clean," she said.

The media had previously reported that, according to the Global Environment Centre (GEC), there was a clear difference in the colour of the water in the rivers in the Klang Valley, from brownish previously to clear now. - *Bernama*