

Extreme heat causes hotspots across province

Hotspots have reappeared in North Sumatra over the last few days following a rise in temperature.

As of Thursday, based on the Terra and Aqua satellites, there were at least 55 hotspots across Sumatra, eight of which were in North Sumatra.

Kuala Namu Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG) database head Mega Sirait said the eight hotspots were located in Deli Serdang, Labuhan Batu and Tapanuli Selatan regencies. The recurrence of hotspots, Mega said, was mainly triggered by a rise in temperature that reached up to 36 degrees Celsius.

“Hot weather and strong winds can easily spark forest fires,” Mega told The Jakarta Post on Thursday.

Last week, a number of hotspots were also seen on the Lake Toba mountain range.

Mega called on the administrations and residents to stay alert against the possibility of forest fires during the upcoming dry season, adding that the temperature could increase further over the next few months.

Meanwhile, Medan BMKG database head Hartanto said the hot weather was caused by a dry southwesterly wind that hampered cloud formation, which resulted in direct sunlight warming the earth. Dermatologist Irwan Fahri Rangkuti said the condition could lead to various skin problems, including heat rash.

He advised residents to wear loose-fitting clothing to prevent skin problems. “Don’t forget to use a parasol or a hat to protect against direct sunshine. It is also important to consume plenty of water, fruit and vegetables,” Irwan said.

Besides North Sumatra, the temperature in neighboring province Riau has also climbed to 36 degrees Celsius, followed by a growing number of hotspots.

Earlier, based on observations by the Pekanbaru BMKG, the maximum temperature during the day in some parts of the province was categorized as “extreme”. The increasing number of hotspots also contributed to the reappearance of mild haze in some parts of Riau.