

Riau haze investigation focuses on companies

The Riau Police are intensifying their investigation into haze by probing a number of companies in Bengkalis and Indragiri Hilir regencies in connection to forest and peatland fires in Riau.

Riau Police chief Brig. Gen. Condro Kirono, however, have refused to reveal the names of the companies. "The cases are still under investigation. We are also digging deeper into the PT NSP [for alleged involvement in forest fires in Meranti Islands regency]. We have questioned 18 witnesses so far," said Condro on Wednesday.

"One thing is for sure, we will bring all offenders, be they individuals or companies, to justice because they have caused great losses on many fronts, including health, education and the economy. They have also tainted Riau's image in the international world."

Condro said the Riau Police were currently handling 70 cases involving forest and peatland fires. As many as 116 individual suspects have been detained. "The dossiers of 62 cases have been completed and will soon be handed over to the court by the prosecutor's office," he added.

Meanwhile, Riau provincial administration is preparing for an extreme dry season, which is expected to start in May.

"The dry season will come at the end of May. We need to stay alert because the upcoming dry season is forecast to be drier than usual and will last until the end of August," said a weather analyst at the Pekanbaru Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), Ardhitama.