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| *In not more than 130 words, write a summary on the haze situation.* |
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| What is the haze? The dictionary describes the phenomenon as the collection in the atmosphere of very fine widely dispersed particles. The result is, instead of blue skies, we have grey skies.  What factors cause these particles to gather? To a certain extent, it must be admitted that the `hazy' conditions occur regularly in many industrial areas as a result of air pollution. Emissions from motor vehicles such as cars, lorries and buses combined with smoke from factories, refineries and open burning all contribute to the haze.  It is human nature to put the blame on other parties. When air quality in Malaysia deteriorates, we commonly blame our neighbours. We accuse farmers in Sumatra and Kalimantan of burning forests to clear land for the cultivation of food crops. There is 'no smoke without fire' so to some extent, there is truth in these accusations but Malaysians are to blame too. 'Hot spots' were discovered in our country too. Our farmers and plantation owners also must bear some of the blame. Malaysians have also discovered that air quality is a regional problem.  When the haze hit Malaysia in August 2005, Malaysia helped provide cloud seeding for the Indonesians. The Royal Malaysian Air Force sent aircrafts. The planes carried salt solution for spraying over clouds in an effort to produce rain. Rain and wind help to keep the affected areas haze-free.  What are the effects of the haze?  The people most affected are the very young and the elderly. The haze affects the respiratory system. Babies and old people have weaker lungs and are therefore more susceptible. People with illnesses like asthma and tuberculosis are also badly affected in general. The public will develop more coughs and colds. Eye infections are also common during this time. People also appear to be more vulnerable to influenza.  Somehow the haze seems to depress many people. Everyone wants blue skies, not grey. The necessity to stay indoors also makes young people restless and bored. They yearn to be outdoors, engaging in sports activities or meeting their friends. For adults in the working world, the effects are felt even more keenly. After being cooped up in an air-conditioned environment for half of the day, they have to spend the rest of their time at home as venturing outside is virtually impossible.  Nature too seems unhappy with the hazy conditions. Gardeners complain that plants bloom less and as a result, fruit trees also do not bear as much fruit as they normally do.  The economic impact of the haze is also another cause for concern. When the hazy conditions reach a dangerous level, corporations and institutions are forced to close their businesses for the duration in which it is deemed unsafe to remain open. Consequently, huge financial losses are borne during this non-productive period.  The authorities publish the air pollution index, which provides the public with information on the varying levels of pollution as a result of the haze. The air pollution index acts as a monitoring tool as the authorities are able to determine which areas are experiencing particularly potent cases of the haze. The government also advises people to take all precautionary measures when outside. This includes investing in surgical face masks and eye drops to avoid the pollutants in the atmosphere and prevent eye irritation. If the haze reaches critical levels, the government will also endorse the closure of schools and discourage people from taking part in outdoor activities. |

**Summary:**

The untitled passage written by an unmentioned author discusses about presence of haze in the atmosphere. The haze is the collection of very fine widely dispersed particles in the atmosphere. Skies become grey. The author states that hazy conditions occur in most industrialized areas as a result of emissions from motor vehicles, factories and open burning. When the haze occurred, Malaysians blamed Indonesian farmers for burning forests. Yet, Malaysian farmers were partly to blame. The Malaysian Air Force sent aircrafts to spray salt solution on clouds to encourage rain. The author also mentioned that the haze affects the very young and elderly especially those with respiratory illnesses. Grey skies also depress many people who have to stay indoors. Plants and vegetables do not thrive. Corporations suffer losses if they have to shut. The air pollution index warns people of danger levels so they can protect themselves. The government advises on safety measures and if necessary, closure of buildings. (123 words)