



WEEKLY UPDATE ON ASEAN PLUS THREE FOOD SECURITY RELATED INFORMATION

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10 - 16 March 2021

Indonesia

Vast areas encountered serious rain-related disasters. High-intensity rainfalls were reported in a district and several regencies in the provinces of South Borneo, East Java, Central Java, West Java, South Sulawesi, West Sumatra and the Special Region of Yogyakarta during 10-14 March 2021. The situations brought heavy flooding as well as gusted wind breaking out in the mentioned areas, causing massive sufferings to the residents and enormous damages to properties.

Overall, nearly 20,000 individuals were severely affected and around 4,000 housing units along with 15 public facilities were either submerged or damaged. The disastrous calamities also inflicted destructions to various infrastructures including roads, bridges, power grids and irrigation systems. Besides, around 2,000 hectares of rice were also lost due to floods.

Source: AHA Centre. (2021, Mar 8-14). *WEEKLY DISASTER UPDATE Week 10.*

Malaysia

A concern on water shortage looms Penang. The Penang Water Supply Corporation (PBAPP) has expressed its

concern over the potential insufficient water supply in Penang State due to the lowest amount of rainfall in the last four years.

The lack of rainfalls results in the low-level water capacities in two major dams namely Air Itam Dam and Teluk Bahang Dam. With the current situation, the water drawn from these two dams can last for not more than 170 days, while the rainy season is expected to arrive in September.

This situation prompts the PBAPP to implement several control measures in an attempt to maintain the available water source as well as suggest all the customers to use the water wisely during the dry season.

Source: New Straits Times. (2021, Mar 12). *First alert out on possible water shortage in Penang.*

The Philippines

An earthquake left people worrying about aftershocks. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said that there was a high possibility of the aftershocks following the 5.1-magnitude quake that struck Zambales in the afternoon on 11 March 2021.

The tectonic trembling was detected with a depth of 15 kilometres under the ground and at 71 kilometres southwest of the Santa Cruz municipality. Fortunately, no damages and casualties were reported.

Source: Philippine News Agency. (2021, Mar 11). *Aftershocks possible from magnitude 5.1 Zambales quake.*

Thailand

Threatening drought alerted the state agencies to take a quick action. Similar with the previous year, a severe drought is predicted to hit Thailand hardly in 2021, especially in the northern part of the country. This creates a grave concern over the water sufficiency for general household usage as well as the highly water-intensive rice farming industry, which accounts significantly for country's economic section.

In response to this, the state agencies have been ordered to speed up their operations to ensure the stability of water resources including the development of underground water sources, particularly in the drought zone, and water gates for preventing saltwater intrusion.

Source: Bangkok Post. (2021, Mar 16). *Prawit urges swift action as severe drought looms.*

China

Northern China got engulfed in a gigantic yellow dust. China's capital, Beijing, along with other parts of northern China was covered by a massive cloud of yellow dust brought over by the sandstorm that blew from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and traveled southward down the country on the night of 14 March 2021. This resulted in the heavy concentration of hazardous PM10 particles that prompted the people in the affected areas to reduce their outdoor exposure, and disrupted their livelihoods, especially in the field of transportation.

The most intense sandstorm in a decade, as said by an official of the China Meteorological Administration, was caused by a combination of a higher land surface temperature, little precipitation and the intensity of the Mongolian cyclone. Such weather was quite rare to occur.

Source: Xinhua. (2021, Mar 16). *1st LD-Writethru: China renews blue alert for sandstorms*; Xinhua. (2021, Mar 15). *Across China: Sandstorm hits north China.*

Republic of Korea

An acute yellow dust storm from China was to blow over the Republic of Korea (ROK). The Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) expected the effect of China's biggest sandstorm in a decade to cover an entire country starting on 16 March 2021.

The sandstorm originated from northern China and moving to the south by riding the northerly wind. The western regions close to China were the first to be blanketed before entering the other regions. Regarding this, the sandstorm was

anticipated to weaken on 17 March 2021; however, its impact could still persist depending on the atmospheric factors.

Source: Yonhap. (2021, Mar 16). *Powerful yellow dust storm to blow into Korea.*

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