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PETALING JAYA: With the hot and hazy weather conditions, the air quality in Malaysia plummeted by 17% within a day with good air quality down to 44% yesterday from 61% on Monday.

The Department of Environment recorded 23 areas with good air quality and 29 areas with moderate air quality. Data for Monday showed 31 areas with good air quality and 20 with moderate air quality
The Malaysian Meteorological Department, meanwhile, recorded 19 areas affected by haze including Malacca, Kuantan, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu, Sepang, Ipoh and Petaling Jaya.

In a statement yesterday, it said the current dry period was due to the tropical storm Aere over north-east of the Philippines and low-pressure area over the Andaman Sea.

◆This resulted in the moisture of our region being drawn to these two areas,◆ said the statement.

The department said the highest maximum temperature observed at its stations throughout the country since May 6 was 36.2◆C.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Medical Association president Dr David Quek said frequent intake of water was critical in this weather.

◆Dehydration is a real possibility. It can cause heat stroke, giddines and breathing difficulty among others,◆ he cautioned.

He urged the public to reduce exercising in the open as it could lead to heat stroke as well.

◆The key is to rehydrate. But don◆t drink soft drinks. Water is the best,◆ he said, adding that people should avoid being outdoors if possible.

Dr Quek also advised those already ill to stay away from public areas until they are fully recovered.</p>