

Beat: Sports

FORMULE 1 THREATENED WHEN INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES FIGHT FIRES AS HAZE CLOAKS

SCHOOLS CLOSED & AIRLINES DELAYED

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USPA NEWS - A worsening haze across northern Indonesia, neighboring Singapore and part of Malaysia force some schools to close and airlines to delay flights. Southern Asia has suffered for years from annual bouts of smog caused by slash-and-burn practices in Sumatra and Kalimantan Islands...

A worsening haze across northern Indonesia, neighboring Singapore and part of Malaysia force some schools to close and airlines to delay flights. Southern Asia has suffered for years from annual bouts of smog caused by slash-and-burn practices in Sumatra and Kalimantan Islands, but government in the region have failed to address the problem.

Indonesian authorities plan to sanction this week three or four companies of the total 26 under investigation, said Environment Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar, with the revoking of their land permits a possibility (Reuters)

Ten of thousands of people in smoke-choked regions of Indonesia have fallen ill, while air travel there has been hit by sporadic flight delays or cancellation due to poor visibility. Fears are mounting that the smog enveloping regional financial hub Singapore, where air quality remained at unhealthy levels, could affect this weekend's Grand Prix. The smog is usually caused by firms and small-holder farmers clearing land adjacent to existing concessions for palm or pulp and paper.

Organizers of Formula One's only night race, which sees cars speed along a brightly illuminated track alongside landmarks and is coupled with pop concerts, have said they are closely monitoring the haze. Smog-belching blazes, an annual problem in Southeast Asia during the dry season, have intensified in Sumatra and the Indonesian part of Borneo Island in the past two weeks, sending a cloud of acrid haze across the region.

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