

Flat deemed safe after gas explosion

Fire and Rescue Dept okays apartment after inspection

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GEORGE TOWN: The low-cost apartment in Jalan Paya Terubong, which saw one of its units rocked by a gas explosion on Sunday, has been declared safe for occupancy.

State Fire and Rescue Department deputy director Hassan As'ari Omar said although the explosion affected units 48 and 49 on the 20th floor, the structure was still sound.

"From our observation, the structure of the building is safe although we may have to rely on other agencies with technical teams to look into the other aspects in a more detailed manner.

"But so far, all the units in both Block A and B are safe for occupancy," he said during a site visit to collect samples at the affected unit yesterday.

Hassan As'ari said the explosion had caused the partition wall between unit 48 and its neighbouring apartment to collapse.

"Although it happened at unit 48, the impact caused the partition wall between the two to collapse. We have collected the samples for analysis to identify the cause of the explosion.

"It will take about two weeks for us to ascertain the cause of the incident," he said.

On Sunday, a man was warded after sustaining 80% burns following the explosion at his home in Green Garden Apartment.

Lee Kok Eang, 62, is now warded at the Penang Hospital for injuries to his head, arms, body

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Hassan As'ari Omar

and feet.

There were also shattered windows in several units nearby as well as cracks on the concrete walls from the incident.

Three other family members, including Lee's daughter-in-law who is seven months' pregnant, escaped unhurt during the 8am incident.

Lee's son Chye Soon, 37, who was present at the site, said his family was now staying at his wife's relatives while his neighbours in unit 49 had moved out.

"My neighbours just rented the place two weeks ago," he said.

Paya Terubong assemblyman Yeoh Soon Hin, who was also present, said the Social Welfare Department had provided RM500 in financial aid to Chye Soon.

"We will see if more aid can be given after investigation.

"As the impact of the explosion affected two units, we will see if it is possible to hire engineers from the Penang Island City Council to check on the rebuilding works.

"From what Bomba told us, some RM7,000 is needed to rebuild the wall structure," he said.