

# HAZMAT releases ammonia gas into the air

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JASIN: The Fire and Rescue Department's Hazardous Materials Unit (HAZMAT) has decided to release the ammonia gas trapped in gas piping at the chicken processing farm in Merlimau, in stages last night.

State Housing, Local Government, Environment and Green Technology Committee chairman Datuk Tey Kok Kiew said the gas release began at 10pm and would take about 10 hours.

He said HAZMAT had sprayed water in five locations in the farm to help release the trapped gas into the air, with gas readings indicating a drop from 500 ppm (part per million) to about 30 ppm within 45 minutes.

The department was also conducting gas readings every two hours in areas within a three-kilometre radius of the factory, Tey said at a press conference at the operations centre, here, late last night, adding that if the readings in the areas indicated that the air was polluted, the release of the gas would be stopped.

Until 11.30pm yesterday, out of the 26 people initially treated at Hospital Melaka earlier in the day following the gas leak which occurred yesterday morning, 11 still remain warded.

Tey urged the public not to panic as the situation was under control, and reminded everyone to get their information from credible sources.

Meanwhile, Jasin District Officer Datuk Anis Ali Hasan said, as a precautionary measure, two temporary evacuation centres had been opened at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Dang Anum in Jasin and SMK Ayer Molek, Melaka Tengah at 9.45pm yesterday.

-- BERNAMA