

Real-time air quality monitoring

Pasir Gudang becomes first industrial town to get pollution alerts

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PASIR GUDANG: Pasir Gudang has become the first industrial town in the country to be equipped with a real-time air monitoring system that can send out alerts in case of air pollution.

Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin said 25 photoionisation detectors (PIDs), which could detect total volatile organic compounds (TVOCs) in the environment, had been installed throughout the district.

“We do not want the Sungai Kim Kim incident that took place last year to recur.

“This is one of the many efforts we have taken to avoid any recurrence,” she said, adding that the air monitoring system cost about RM6.9mil.

She said this during a press conference at the Pasir Gudang Environment Department (DoE) branch at Menara Aqabah here after visiting the district’s air monitoring system yesterday.

Yeo said two units of mobile gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GCMS) and two units of mobile



gas chromatography-flame ionisation detector (GCFID), along with six units of portable Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), were also made available at the district and had all been operating since January.

GCMS is used to analyse gases detected by PIDs, while GCFID and FTIR detect toxic gases.

“The air monitoring system will also directly give out alerts to DoE on the air quality of the area and DoE officers would then go to the

location indicated in the system for further checks,” she said.

She added that the public could also check the air quality reading recorded by the system online starting from the fourth quarter of the year.

Yeo noted that the DoE had conducted 664 inspections on factories in the district, and issued some 769 notices, compounds, seizure orders and court orders throughout 2019.

On a separate matter, the government hopes to amend the Environmental Quality Act 1974 by this year, and engagements with stakeholders, including those in academia, non-governmental organisations and the industry are ongoing.

“However, any amendments made to an Act will take time and we need to ensure we have engaged with all of those involved to ensure the Act is effective.

“The important thing is that we come out with an Act that is more systematic in dealing with monitoring pollution, and ensure punishment for environment crimes commensurate with the gravity of the offence,” Yeo said.

She added that a new Act might have to be created if too many amendments needed to be made to the existing Act.

Real-time detection:

Yeo (second from left) visiting one of the PIDs at Pasir Gudang Stadium.

Watch the video
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