

Clean it up, industry told

Ministry: Govt will extend ban if miners fail to comply

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KUALA LUMPUR: Pahang's bauxite industry has been told to clean up its act, with the Government also slapping a three-month mining ban starting Jan 15.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the Government would not hesitate to extend the ban if the companies failed to comply with the new rules to tackle rampant illegal mining and pollution.

"We leave it to the industry. If the industry wants to manage this environmental issue, it can be done. If not, we will extend the moratorium," he said at a joint press conference with Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob yesterday.

Wan Junaidi said the Government did not intend to impose an outright ban on Pahang's bauxite industry but was serious about finding a long-term solution to the issue.



Dusty commute: Motorcyclists covering their faces as a truck carrying bauxite passes by in Bukit Goh, Kuantan. — EPA

He said existing stockpiles of bauxite at the Kuantan Port and those held by the 11 operators would be allowed to be exported, to reduce the possibility of further pollution from surface runoff.

The port has been given seven days to clear the stockpiles, to prevent bauxite from seeping into the sea.

The stockpile owners must also take steps to mitigate pollution, including building washing bays, before the stockpiles are allowed to be exported.

Wan Junaidi said those who failed to clear their stockpiles within the three-month period would lose their Approved Permit (AP) to export.

He said a central store would be built to contain future bauxite stockpiles in the state by the end of the same period.

This will have drainage and filtration systems, along with washing bays, to prevent air and water pollution.

He said only legal bauxite miners would have access to the central stockpile.

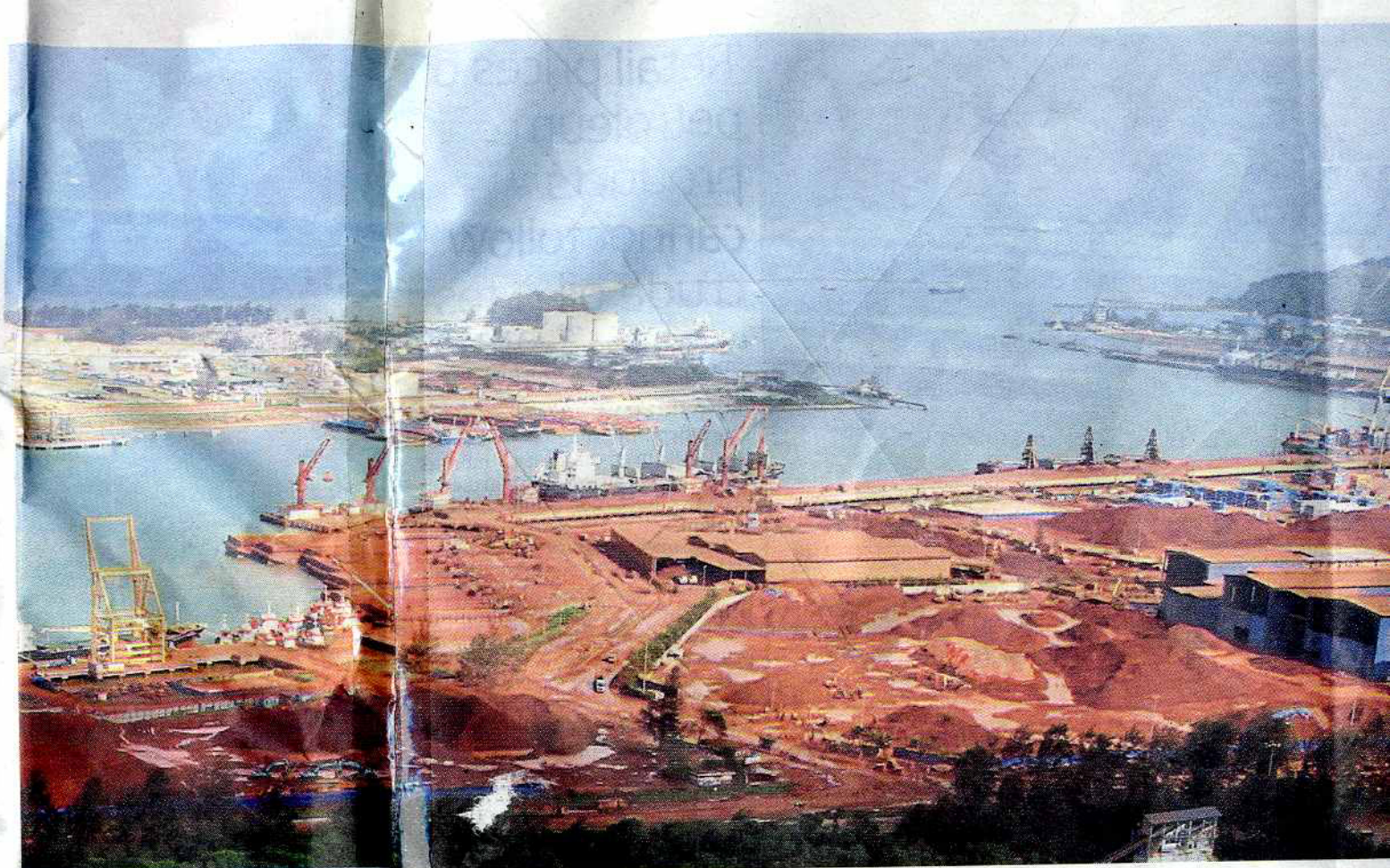
"At the same time, APs will be limited to the monthly capacity of the port and will no longer be issued to individuals," said Wan Junaidi.

Only companies will be allowed to apply for an AP.

Wan Junaidi said this measure should reduce illegal mining and the problem of *lori hantu* (unlicensed lorries) transporting bauxite.

He said the police, army, Road Transport Department and Land Public Transport Commission would enforce the moratorium.

Watch the video
thestartv.com 



50 shades of red: The massive

stockpiles of bauxite in Kuantan Port have caused the entire area to be coloured a reddish laterite hue.