

MACC now targets bauxite mining

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10 officers remanded after syndicate is busted

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PETALING JAYA: Illegal bauxite mining is the latest issue on the radar of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) when anti-graft officers detained officers from the state Land and Mines Office (PTG) and the Customs Department suspected to be involved in illegal bauxite mining activities in Kuantan.

Nine staff members from the Pahang Land and Mines Office and an officer from the Customs Department were detained in an operation after the MACC discovered that a syndicate was involved in illegal mining activities. Also seized were at least 18 lorries used to transport bauxite from illegal mining sites in Bukit Goh and Bukit Sagu.

All the suspects are believed to be part of a protection syndicate and had played an active role in allowing the illegal mining of the commodity to take place in the district.

It is learnt that the suspects were receiving payments and a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of bauxite.

Sources said the first suspect, a senior Customs officer, aged 56, was picked up just after midnight on Tuesday.

In follow-up raids, nine PTG officers, aged between 29 and 59, were detained at about 3.30pm yesterday.

It is learnt that anti-graft officers also raid-

ed the PTG office in Kuantan to seize relevant documents to assist in their probe.

"This came after information was obtained during raids on the Customs office in Kuantan Port and Kuantan Port Consortium. Anti-graft officers have been monitoring the activities of the suspects for the past few months,"

said a source.

It is learnt that the illegal bauxite mining activities have slowed down after the MACC carried out several raids last year.

But the culprits have since resumed their activities over the past few months. Their activities did not go unnoticed by the MACC.

MACC director of intelligence Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahya (pic) confirmed the arrests, saying that his officers had been watching over the syndicate for the past three to four months.

The Customs officer has been remanded for a week for investigations, while the nine PTG officers were held overnight at the Kuantan MACC office and are expected to be brought to court today to be remanded.

The Government earlier announced an extension to the moratorium on bauxite mining in Kuantan until Dec 31 this year.



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