

# 3-month ban on bauxite mining in Pahang

**STANDSTILL:**  
Suspension to begin on Jan 15 to resolve problems

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**T**HE government has imposed a three-month suspension on bauxite mining in Kuantan starting on Jan 15.

The directive was among steps that have been identified by the federal and Pahang authorities to resolve problems caused by uncontrolled bauxite mining in the state.

Other steps that will be taken include clearing of bauxite stockpiles, setting up an integrated storage area and a bauxite waste treatment system.

In addition, the application of Approved Permits (APs) for bauxite-related activities have been frozen since last week, while in the future, APs will be issued only to registered companies and no longer to individuals.

There are 22 AP holders for bauxite mining and exports.

"Starting Jan 15, everything will

come to a standstill in Kuantan," said the natural resources and environment minister.

"No movement at all because we want the 11 stockpile holders to do mitigation in each stockpile and there must be washing bays. Likewise, near the port, all stockpiles must be cleared because we do not want any dumping there that will flow into the sea," Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said at a joint press conference with Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob here yesterday.

"The stockpiles will be moved to a place called the central stockpile. Only one stockpile centre will be built with drainage and filtration systems and washing bay."

Wan Junaidi also said the integrated stockpile centre would likely be built either in Pengorak, near Balok, or another location yet to be identified.

Prior to this, residents and environmentalists have been fuming over the seeming inaction by the state authorities on pollution and other problems caused by bauxite mining.

Such problems have been highlighted in news reports since last year, with the pollution caused by bauxite mining making newspaper headlines over the past few weeks.

Wan Junaidi said as a proactive measure, the Department of Environment had set up six ad-hoc sta-



Pahang Menteri Besar **Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob** (left) speaking at Hotel Istana in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him is Natural Resources and Environment Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar**. Pic by Yazit Razali

tions to monitor the water quality in affected areas in Sungai Riau, Sungai Mabok and Sungai Pinang, which had been classified as Class III (not suitable for body contact and consumption) under the National Water Quality Standard.

"The results of the latest sampling made on Dec 30 will be known only in three weeks."

On long-term measures, he said bauxite-mining companies would not be able to export the material unless they complied with the terms and conditions set by the government.

These include washing bays, proper drainage and filtration system at mining sites.

Wan Junaidi said the ministry's secretary-general would chair a meeting today on empowering enforcement agencies, including police, armed forces, Customs, Road Transport Department (RTD) and Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD), to ensure compliance.

"They (the agencies) cannot ignore this problem anymore. The menteri besar can only do so much.

"The transportation of bauxite (using lorries) is under the jurisdic-

tion of RTD and SPAD."

Bauxite mining in Pahang started in 2013, with production increased in mid-2014 due to easy port access, cheap transportation and high profit margin.

Malaysia contributes more than 40 per cent of China's bauxite imports last year, with more than 20,000 million tonnes exported to the country for the aluminium manufacturing industry.

**Page 1 pic:** A bauxite mine in **Felda Bukit Goh, Kuantan**, yesterday.