



KERATAN AKHBAR

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## Bauxite mining may resume soon

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government will allow bauxite mining to resume if new standard operating procedures (SOP) for such excavations prove effective, Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Xavier Jayakumar said yesterday.

He said the new SOP is being tested in existing bauxite mines in Pahang.

"The Pahang government has agreed to allow only a few operators to operate the mines in Gebeng, near Kuantan," he told the Dewan Rakyat during question time.

In response to a question from Che Alias Hamid (BN-Kemaman), Xavier said the Pahang government asked for six months to test the effectiveness of the new SOP before it allows mining activities statewide, following which it could be done around the country.

"The operators must obtain the approved environmental impact assessment certification in order to operate."

The government would cancel the operating permit of any bauxite mine operator who fails to observe the new SOP, he added.

The implementation of the new SOP for bauxite mining took effect on Sept 5.

Besides the EIA certification, other criteria set in the new SOP included a minimum size of bauxite mines, which can cover at least 20ha each.

Bauxite mining in Pahang was halted under a moratorium issued on Jan 15, 2016 following complaints from residents on air pollution and dangers posed by lorries transporting bauxite.