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Bauxite moratorium extended

EXPORT: More time needed as operators failed to clear stockpiles

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THE Federal Government yesterday extended the moratorium on bauxite-mining activities in Pahang for another three months ending March 31.

The new extension brings the suspension on mining of bauxite to 14 months since the first moratorium was imposed in January.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the

moratorium was extended to enable mining operators to clear their remaining stockpiles.

"In line with the agreement between the federal and Pahang governments, the cabinet yesterday (Wednesday) agreed to extend the moratorium.

"We want to stress that the moratorium is not to stop the mining activities," he said here yesterday.

As of Dec 6, 2.95 million tonnes of bauxite had yet to be exported and most of the stockpiles were in Felda Bukit Goh. Wan Junaidi said the bauxite-mining operations should be better regulated.

"We hope the extension will give them more time to clear the stockpiles and give more space for the relevant agencies and industries to carry out improvements."

He said operators had so far failed to clear their stockpiles within the stipulated period as they were unable to comply with all the terms and



Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar

conditions to transfer the ores to Kuantan port.

He said the Kuantan Port Consortium (KPC) had been upgrading its facilities to ensure that it could cope with the bauxite export.

Wan Junaidi said among the improvements made were the setting up of a sheltered transfer site to store bauxite stockpiles; constructing two washing bay filters; setting up a dedicated berth; and, building an improved drainage system for loading and unloading ores.

The ministry would consider collaborating with other agencies, such as the police, Natural Resources Department and Civil Defence Department, to conduct stricter enforcement in bauxite mines.

Wan Junaidi said the ministry had also set a rule for the operators to pay the bauxite royalty first before permits were issued.

The Pahang government, he said, had so far collected RM50 million in royalties compared with RM180 million that it was supposed to earn.