

MACC seeks to cancel bauxite mining permits

He said this applied to all stockpiles regardless of whether they were on private or government land.

"From our investigations, the bauxite stockpiled by illegal miners has collectively come up to more than 10 million tonnes, based on our estimates," he said.

"We are also in discussion with the Natural Resources Ministry to re-look the approval permits given to bauxite miners. We may ask that the permits be cancelled immediately.

"We also want the ministry to review the

criteria for granting companies permits to mine."

Azam said the move to seize the stockpiles was to stop illegal mining activities that had been taking place in the state despite a ban being in place since January last year.

"We also urge the public to alert MACC when they come across any activities related to bauxite," he said, adding the illegally mined bauxite were meant for export to China.

Earlier this month, nine officers from the

Pahang Land and Mines Office and a senior Customs officer were arrested on suspicion of being paid by illegal bauxite mining syndicates.

The nine, aged between 39 and 59, were picked up in Kuantan on Aug 2, and the 56-year-old Customs officer was detained the next day.

Eighteen lorries used to transport bauxite from mining sites in Bukit Goh and Bukit Sagu were also seized.

The suspects were believed to have been

paid a percentage of the proceeds of the much sought-after bauxite.

The government has extended the moratorium on the mining of the mineral, which was supposed to expire on June 30, to the end of the year.

The MACC also raided the Pahang Land and Mines Office, Customs Department and Kuantan Port to obtain documents related to the investigations.

The commission had been monitoring the illegal activity over the past several months.



What is bauxite?

Bauxite is a rock formed from laterite soil that has been severely leached of silica and other soluble materials in a wet tropical or subtropical climate. It is the primary ore of aluminum. Almost all of the aluminum that has ever been produced has been extracted from bauxite.

Is bauxite dangerous to health?

Like most ores, bauxite contains traces of metals such as arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel and naturally-occurring radioactive materials, such as thorium and uranium, which have been known to affect health.

Physical properties of bauxite

Bauxite is typically a soft, white to grey to reddish brown material. These properties are useful for identifying bauxite. However, they have nothing to do with bauxite's value or usefulness. This is because bauxite is almost always processed into another material with physical properties that are distinctly different from bauxite.

What is bauxite used for?

Bauxite is the main raw material used in the commercial production of alumina and aluminium metal. Bauxite is also often used as a sand-blasting abrasive and an oil field proppant.

Australia is the world's largest producer of bauxite, representing 30 per cent of global production in 2012. Other leading bauxite producing nations include China, India, Jamaica and Russia.

Source: Geology.com and Geoscience Australia