



Ministers in discord over Lynas issue

Chester Tay & Adam Akmal Aziz/ The Edge Financial Daily
April 02, 2019 09:03 am +08

This article first appeared in The Edge Financial Daily, on April 2, 2019.



THE EDGE Collection
Click here to find out more



KUALA LUMPUR: In a surprising turn of events, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof yesterday lambasted his colleague Yeo Bee Yin, who is the energy, science, technology, environment and climate change minister, for compelling Lynas Corp Ltd to ship out its wastes from the country, saying her stand was not one that was endorsed by the cabinet.

He said Yeo has to “take responsibility” for her statement — issued in December last year — on the matter, saying the cabinet had never decided on any measure to manage the wastes produced by the Australian rare earth miner’s Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP) in Gebeng, Kuantan, Pahang.

The Alor Gajah member of parliament (MP) also said Lynas’ investment in Malaysia is “too big to ignore”, and that the cabinet is not supposed to force the company to export its plant’s wastes back to Australia, unless they are “very unsafe”.

His comment, said to reporters in Parliament yesterday, came after he remarked on Saturday that the government would allow Lynas to continue its operations at LAMP in the interest of foreign direct investment.



Mohd Redzuan's statement raised more than a few eyebrows, as the matter is not under his ministry's purview.

The episode happened after Deputy Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday that the ministry had written to Yeo's Australian counterpart to collaborate on the transfer of Lynas' accumulated radioactive wastes from Malaysia to Australia.

Isnaraissah revealed this during the ministerial question-and-answer time, when she responded to a question from Wong Chen (Pakatan — Subang) on steps taken by her ministry to ensure Lynas takes back its residual wastes to Australia. Wong was referring to the radioactive water leached purification (WLP) solid wastes that had accumulated at LAMP from 2012, which totalled 451,564 tonnes as at December last year.

Isnaraissah added that the cabinet-approved task force responsible for overseeing Lynas' obligation to take the wastes out of Malaysia is still identifying international procedures and instruments to facilitate the process.

"[This is done while] taking into account legal, safety and security aspects to ensure the safety of the public, the workers, and the environment," she said.

Soon after, however, Mohd Redzuan met with reporters and slammed Yeo for her decision to compel Lynas to ship out the wastes as a precondition for the renewal of the rare earth miner's three-year temporary storage licence for WLP residue, which is up for renewal in September.

"We have an independent high-level committee [that studied the issue]. I would suggest that the government make the findings of the report [the committee submitted to the ministry] public, so that people understand exactly how we are going to manage Lynas. But, as it is now, it is too early to make a decision to compel Lynas to take back its wastes," he said.

"We are a government that is friendly to business, so we have to come out with measures to manage the wastes. Lynas' investment is too big to ignore. You had an agreement to allow investors to come into this country previously ... We cannot just simply force someone to take back their wastes, that was not the condition in the contract.

"If the committee thinks that [the wastes are] unsafe, say [they are] very unsafe, then we have to shut it (the plant) down. But as it is now, there is no indication, as far as I know, that the plant is unsafe, other than a suggestion that the wastes should be taken back," he added.

Mohd Redzuan added that the cabinet's decision is "clear": to allow Lynas to operate.

While Yeo could not be reached for comment as calls and text messages to her phone went unanswered, Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh said Mohd Redzuan had no "locus standi" to comment on the issue as it does not fall under his ministry.



Speaking to pressmen later in Parliament, Fuziah said Yeo's ministry is the rightful one in charge of addressing the LAMP issue, which has nothing to do with Mohd Redzuan's entrepreneurial development portfolio.

"Let the ministers settle this, because MESTECC (ministry of energy, science, technology, environment and climate change) has to answer this, in regard to the risks. On investment, it is under Miti (ministry of international trade and industry) and Mida (Malaysian Investment Development Authority). [It has] nothing to do with the entrepreneur development ministry.

"He (Mohd Redzuan) has no locus standi. I have locus standi [because it's in my constituency]. I maintain my stance and agree with what the MESTECC minister has said on precondition for renewing the licence, which is they (Lynas) have to send the wastes back to Australia. The due date has not lapsed yet. It is in September," said Fuziah, who is also deputy minister in the prime minister's department.

Fuziah also reiterated her stand that the government should not renew Lynas' licence if the company cannot meet the precondition.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/ministers-discord-over-lynas-issue>



Resumption of bauxite mining will have 'positive impact' on IJM — CEO

Emir Zainul/The Edge Financial Daily

April 02, 2019 09:10 am +08

This article first appeared in The Edge Financial Daily, on April 2, 2019.





KUALA LUMPUR: The resumption of bauxite mining and export activities will have a “positive impact” on IJM Corp Bhd — which owns a 60% stake in Kuantan port where the bulk of the ore is exported from — said its chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD) Datuk Soam Heng Choon.

The moratorium on mining and exporting of the mineral ended yesterday (March 31), but mining activities are only expected to resume by year-end as bauxite mine operators will have to apply for new licences and follow a new standard operating procedure (SOP).

The moratorium was first enforced in Pahang on Jan 15, 2016.

Advertisement

On Sunday, the Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources announced that bauxite exports will be capped at 600,000 tonnes a month.

“So if it comes through, then there will be an additional 600,000 tonnes of cargo going through the [Kuantan] port every month which [has] a positive impact on us,” Soam said yesterday.

He said a meeting has been called by the ministry to explain the new SOP to stakeholders by mid-April.

“After the engagement with stakeholders, they will look at the comments and all this together with the miners before the mining operations can be resumed,” he said.

For Kuantan port, Soam said, the priority is to remove the remaining bauxite cargo before new stocks are exported through the port.

“We still have about 200,000 tonnes of bauxite that will be removed before new stocks are allowed into the port. For us as a port operator, we do not want our port to be a storage area, so whatever comes into the port must be a transit point for it to be taken out of the country,” he added.

Soam was speaking to reporters after a briefing on the RHB LEKAS Highway Ride 2019, a night cycling ride event organised by RHB Banking Group and Lebuhraya Kajang-Seremban Sdn Bhd (LEKAS), which is a member of IJM Corp’s toll division.

The race, to be held on July 27, is expected to attract over 4,500 participants.

Soam said LEKAS will be upgrading its pavements and road markings at an estimated cost of RM1.5 million, and will be closed for at least 10 hours for the event, which will cost it 55,000 vehicles in traffic volume and RM180,000 in revenue.

“We are thrilled to return as the venue sponsor as we put a lot of value into associating the IJM brand with promoting community spirit and healthy activities that we can all enjoy.

“More than a gathering of passionate cyclists, this event is a reflection of our commitment to promote responsible and safe cycling,” he said earlier.



Johor identifying areas to relocate factories from Pasir Gudang — Osman

Bernamea

April 02, 2019 01:20 am +08



THE EDGE Collection
 Click here to find out more



SHAH ALAM (April 1): The Johor Government is in the midst of identifying several areas suitable for the relocation of factories from the Pasir Gudang area, said Menteri Besar Datuk Osman Sapian.

He said this was aimed at preventing a recurrence of last month's chemical waste pollution in Sungai Kim Kim in Pasir Gudang as well as to safeguard the environment in the area.

He said it was also because the State Government planned to upgrade Pasir Gudang's status to a city as its population was about to breach the 600,000 mark.

"It's not suitable for us to give that place (Pasir Gudang) permit to build factories, which may eventually spark a similar incident (like Sungai Kim Kim).

"So, we plan to identify another area, maybe far from Pasir Gudang, that is suitable to be approved if they want to build either small or medium-sized factories there," he said.

He said this after the winding up speech by Port Dickson MP Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim titled 'Institutional Reforms' at the Rise of the Asian Tiger Convention at Dewan Agung Tuanku Canselor, Universiti Teknologi Mara here today.



Elaborating, Osman said the incident occurred due to manufacturing activities that had taken place in the area for the last 30 years.

“At that time, Pasir Gudang was not as densely developed and the time was right (to set up the factories), but now it’s not suitable anymore. So, we want to relocate them to other places to safeguard the environment.

“Maybe in the Kota Tinggi area or that in Kluang or Simpang Renggam and such,” he added.



Cabinet hasn't decided on Lynas waste; Yeo has to 'take responsibility' for her statement, says Mohd Redzuan

Chester Tay/theedgemarkets.com
April 01, 2019 13:35 pm +08



KUALA LUMPUR (April 1): Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof said his colleague Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin has to take responsibility for her statement on the pre-condition set for Lynas Corp Ltd to ship out its harmful waste from Malaysia.



Mohd Redzuan revealed that the Cabinet has never decided collectively on the measures to manage waste out of Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP) in Gebeng, Pahang.

Speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby today, Mohd Redzuan said the investment from Lynas Corp Ltd in Malaysia is "too big to ignore", and that the Cabinet is not supposed to force the company to export its harmful waste back to Australia, unless they are "very unsafe".

"We have an independent high level committee. I would suggest the government to make the findings in the report public, so that people understand exactly how we are going to manage Lynas. But as it is now, it is too early to make a decision to compel people to take back the waste," he said.

"We are a government that is friendly to business, so we have to come out with measures to manage waste. Lynas investment is too big to ignore. In my view and we have discussed this in Cabinet, we should continue, but waste is a separate matter to be addressed. There are other alternatives to manage these wastes.

"You have an agreement to allow investors to come into this country previously, therefore we have to manage it, we cannot just simply force someone to take back the waste, that was not the condition in the contract. If the committee thinks that it (the waste) is unsafe, say it is very unsafe, then we have to shut it down. But as it is now there is no indication, as far as I know, that the plant is unsafe, other than a suggestion that the waste should be taken back," he added.

Therefore, Mohd Redzuan said the Cabinet's decision is "clear" — to allow Lynas to operate.

"Waste is a separate matter to be addressed. There is no decision collectively by the government to send back the waste to Australia, we have to have a bilateral understanding. We have still yet to make a firm decision collectively to send the waste to Australia, no! It is a suggestion, and there are many factors we have to consider, we have to manage the waste, rely on facts and reports.

"If the review committee report says we have to shut it down for the sake of safety, we will, that is the government's stance, and it has to be make known to the public, what is the real reason we have to shut it down," he said.

The Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change has set two pre-conditions to Lynas before the former will consider renewing the operating licence of the rare earth materials producer in Malaysia.

The two new pre-conditions set by the ministry are for the export of water leached purification (WLP) residue before Sept 2, 2019 and for the submission of an action plan on the disposal of its 1.11 million tonnes of neutralization underflow residue (NUF), for which the current approval is valid until Feb 15, 2019.



The waste has been accumulated since 2012, amid exemptions by related agencies. Yeo had explained before that the common practice for industrial waste dictates a maximum amount of 20 metric tonnes and a maximum period of six months.

In 2012, Lynas issued a letter of undertaking to the Atomic Energy Licensing Board, in which it agreed to remove from Malaysia all of its waste generated by LAMP during its temporary operating licence's period "if necessary".

On Dec 5 last year, Lynas argued that the executive review committee report on the operations of LAMP in Kuantan, Pahang, recommended it immediately identify and build a permanent disposal facility (PDF) for its WLP residue.

"Export should only be considered if a PDF is not possible," Lynas said in a statement on Dec 5.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/cabinet-hasnt-decided-lynas-waste-yeo-has-take-responsibility-her-statement-says-mohd>



Lynas is not under Entrepreneur Development Ministry's purview, says Kuantan MP

Chester Tay and Adam Akmal Aziz/theedgemarkets.com

April 01, 2019 18:00 pm +08



THE EDGE Collection
Click here to find out more



KUALA LUMPUR (April 1): Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh has commented that the waste pollution issue on Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP) in Gebeng, Pahang, is not under the purview of the Entrepreneur Development Ministry.



Speaking to reporters at Parliament lobby today, Fuziah said the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (Mestecc) is the public department that is in charge of addressing the risk at LAMP, while investment matters have to be referred to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Miti) and Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida).

"Let the Ministers settle this, because Mestecc has to answer this in regards to the risk. On investment, it is under Miti and Mida, nothing to do with the Entrepreneur Development Ministry.

"He (Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Md Yusof) has no locus standi, I have locus standi. I maintain my stance, and agree with what Mestecc Minister has said, which is the pre-condition of renewing the licence, whereby they have to send the waste back to Australia, and the due date is not expired yet. It is in September," said Fuziah, who is also the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

"The Deputy (Mestecc) Minister has said that we will collaborate with the Australian Government to send back the waste, so let's wait. In my opinion, if they are not able to meet the deadline, their license should not be renewed, because that is a pre-condition.

"I don't think they should be allowed to continue to renew their licence if they fail to meet the deadline," she added.

To recap, Mohd Redzuan (PH-Alor Gajah) in the morning commented that the Cabinet had never decided collectively on the measures to manage the wastes of LAMP, and that the investment from Lynas Corp Ltd in Malaysia is "too big to ignore". Consequently, the Cabinet is not supposed to force the company to send its harmful wastes back to Australia, unless they are "very unsafe".

Redzuan's remark came after Mestecc's Deputy Minister Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis noted in Parliament that Minister Yeo Bee Yin had written an official letter to her Australian counterpart to collaborate on the transfer of Lynas' accumulated radioactive wastes from Malaysia to Australia.

His remark contradicted Mestecc's move to summon Lynas to ship out the toxic wastes as one of the pre-conditions to renew the latter's the operating licence of the rare earth materials producer in Malaysia.

The letter, said Isnaraissah in the Dewan Rakyat today, was written on Feb 26.

Isnaraissah was responding to a question from Wong Chen [PH-Subang] on steps taken by the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change to ensure Lynas returns its residual wastes to Australia.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/lynas-not-under-entrepreneur-development-ministrys-purview-says-kuantan-mp>



Malaysia seeks Australia's collaboration to ship out Lynas waste

Adam Aziz/theedgemarkets.com
April 01, 2019 12:34 pm +08



KUALA LUMPUR (April 1): Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin has written an official letter to her Australian counterpart to collaborate on the transfer of Lynas' accumulated radioactive waste from Malaysia to Australia.

The letter, said Yeo's deputy Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis in the Dewan Rakyat today, was written on Feb 26, 2019.

Isnaraissah was responding to a question from Wong Chen [PH-Subang] on steps taken by the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change to ensure Lynas returns its residual waste to Australia.

Advertisement



The waste in question is radioactive water leached purification (WLP) solid waste, of which 451,564 tonnes was accumulated in Lynas' Kuantan operating site since 2012 up until December 2018.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet-approved task force responsible to oversee Lynas' obligation of removing the waste from Malaysia is still identifying international procedures and instruments for the process, Isnaraissah added.

"[This is done while] taking into account legal, safety and security aspects to ensure the safety of the public, the workers, and the environment," she said.

On a related matter, Isnaraissah said she will raise to the ministry the suggestion to request Japan — Lynas' major funder and customer — to boycott any dealings with the company until the waste issue is resolved.

According to Wong, Japanese banks contribute a substantial portion of Lynas' funding, and the rare earths mined from Kuantan are largely sold to the Japanese market.

In December last year, Malaysia's Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) told Lynas — the world's biggest producer of rare earths outside China — that it must export stockpiles of a type of residue from its processing plant by Sept 2, when its full operating stage licence is due for renewal.

In February, Lynas said in its half-year results report that exporting the WLP residue within the mandated timeline was "unachievable".

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/malaysia-seeks-australias-collaboration-ship-out-lynas-waste>



Malaysia drafts monthly bauxite exports target at 600,000 tonnes

Reuters/Reuters

April 01, 2019 14:57 pm +08



bernama

THE EDGE™ Collection

[Click here to find out more](#)



KUALA LUMPUR (April 1): Malaysia has capped its monthly bauxite exports at 600,000 tonnes in draft proposals that aim to standardise the operating procedures for bauxite mining and export activities in its eastern state of Pahang.

The Kuantan port authority, which exports the bulk of Malaysia's bauxite from the country, had fixed the export capacity of the ore, said the ministry of water, land and natural resources in a draft of the new standard operating procedures on its website on Sunday.

"This capacity has taken into consideration various aspects including issues of cleanliness and the environment," according to the draft proposals.

The draft also included regulations for buffer zones between mining sites and residential areas, licensing procedures, and stipulates that bauxite from mines more than 5 kilometres from the Kuantan port need to be delivered to a centralized stockpile before it is sent to the port for shipment.



The ministry will take inputs from members of the public, industry and NGOs on the draft proposals on April 14 at Kuantan.

Malaysia was once the biggest supplier of bauxite to top buyer China, with shipments peaking at nearly 3.5 million tonnes a month at the end of 2015. Bauxite ore is the world's main source of aluminium.

Unregulated mining and run-offs from unsecured stockpiles from mining areas largely in Pahang contaminated water sources and caused air and land pollution, leading to a ban on all bauxite mining activity since early 2016.

In February, Malaysia announced lifting of the ban by end-March, but said all mining and export activities would be done with new standard operating procedures and under tighter laws.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/malaysia-drafts-monthly-bauxite-exports-target-600000-tonnes>



> Local

Climate change causing more waterspouts near Penang

01 APR 2019 / 20:28 H.



A picture obtained via social media showing a waterspout near Penang Island.

GEORGE TOWN: Penangites are likely to see more waterspouts at sea surrounding the island due to climate change.

A spokesman for the Meteorological Services Department in Penang said the rise in global temperatures could raise the frequency of waterspouts.

He was commenting on an incident today where a waterspout caused damage to some apartments in the Tanjong Tokong area.

The waterspout hit a row of apartments and blew away the rooftops of at least six apartment units on the beachfront, unsettling the residents.

“It was like a tornado,” some witnesses said. Many residents captured videos and pictures of the phenomenon and uploaded them onto social media.

The clips show zinc sheets at a construction site being lifted off the ground and swirling in the air.

Compared to tornadoes – which are frequently experienced in plains and flat areas in countries like the United States – winds caused by waterspouts are about 10 times weaker. In the US, tornadoes are nicknamed “twisters”.

According to the spokesman, the waterspouts in Malaysia are similar to tornadoes.

“But with climate change, it may turn out to be a powerful wind storm and it can cause damage to property and endanger lives,” he added.

He advised the public to stay away if waterspouts form although they may seem harmless.

Meanwhile, state executive councillor, Zairil Khir Johari, said aid had been sent to the residents whose homes were damaged by the weather phenomenon.

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/climate-change-causing-more-waterspouts-near-penang-YD746504>



> Local

Ministry studying sites for WTE plant (Updated)

02 APR 2019 / 13:29 H.



Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin

KUALA LUMPUR: The Housing and Local Government Ministry (KPKT) is evaluating existing sanitary landfills as suitable sites to develop waste to energy (WTE) plants.

Its Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin said the review is being conducted for the construction of a WTE plant in two years'

time.

“The usage of dump sites is expensive with land cost as one of the burdening factors while WTE is cleaner, more productive and more economical,” she said at the Minister’s Question Time at Dewan Rakyat today.

She was replying to Steven Choong Shiau Yoon (PH-Tebrau) who wanted to know the direction of KPKT on the rubbish disposal system in the country.

Zuraida said the transition to WTE would also generate revenue to the country from the production of renewable energy.

Meanwhile during the oral question and answer session, Zuraida said KPKT intends to centralise processing of imported plastic waste to facilitate monitoring of the companies involved.

She said the measure is aimed at eradicating operations of imported plastic by illegal factories which severely affected the environment.

“State governments should centralise all of them in a designated waste area and if it is found outside the area, it would be considered as an illegal factory,” she said.

She was replying to a supplementary question by Datuk Che Abdullah Mat (PAS-Tumpat) who wanted to know if the government intends to ban the import of plastic waste.

She added that the ministry’s enforcement with the cooperation the Customs Department could tighten surveillance at the entry points of Malaysia to stop the inflow of plastic waste.

— *Bernama*

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/ministry-studying-sites-for-wte-plant-updated-EJ748633>



> Local

Centralised waste park for every state: Zuraida

ASHWIN KUMAR /02 APR 2019 / 13:40 H.



Plastic waste disposal in Kuala Lumpur. Picture taken on Sept 25, 2019. — Bernama

KUALA LUMPUR: A centralised waste park will be set up to process and recycle plastic waste in every state, Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin said today.

Any plastic waste recycling factory outside of the designated area will be declared illegal once the centralised waste park is operational, she said.

“By placing all plastic waste factories in a centralised waste park, we (ministry) can monitor and manage clean plastic waste imports better. That’s the way forward,” Zuraida said in reply to a question by Che Abdullah Mat Nawi (PAS-Tumpat).

“Any factory outside this designated area will be considered as an illegal factory.”

She also said her ministry is working with the Customs Department to inspect each container entering the country so that only clean plastics are allowed to be brought in.

The ministry is in talks with state governments on suitable locations for the parks. It is also assessing landfills to be converted into waste parks.

There are also plans for each state to have a waste-to-energy (WTE) park, with larger states requiring more than one.

Each WTE plant will require a land size of between 4.04 and 8.09 hectares.

Zuraida said the federal government would engage with the state government on land allocation if the states do not have enough land to fit a WTE plant.

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/centralised-waste-park-for-every-state-zuraida-EJ748688>



> Local

Gov't looking for “best solution” to deal with Lynas waste

RAJVINDER SINGH / 01 APR 2019 / 15:07 H.



Rare earth oxides praseodymium and neodymium are pictured in the final stage of production at Lynas Corp Ltd's Advanced Materials Plant in Gebeng, July 3, 2014. — Reuters

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is looking for the “best solution” to resolve the waste management problem faced by Lynas Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

The company has come up with several suggestions on how to deal with the waste and the government is considering them, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan Yusof told reporters at the Parliament lobby today.

However, he stressed that there was no indication Lynas' operations posed an environmental threat.

“The government is investor friendly and has made a collective decision to allow Lynas to remain in the country,” Redzuan said.

He also pointed out that there was no agreement with the company to send the waste back to Australia.

Redzuan said the waste management issue was separate from the government's decision to allow Lynas to continue operating in Malaysia.

“We have established a high-level independent committee and we're waiting for its report. Before we can make any decision on the waste, the Cabinet will have to discuss it,” he said.

He added that the report would be made public if the company's operations posed any threat to the people.

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/gov-t-looking-for-best-solution-to-deal-with-lynas-waste-DA741764>



HOME/MALAYSIA

Minister: Centralised hub for recycling plastic waste in the pipeline

Published 4 hours ago on 02 April 2019

By Azril Annuar



Zuraida Kamaruddin speaks to reporters during the press conference in Parliament in Kuala Lumpur April 2, 2019. — Picture by Ahmad Zamzahuri

KUALA LUMPUR, April 2 — The government plans to establish a centralised waste park to process and recycle plastic waste, Zuraida Kamaruddin said in Parliament today.

The housing and local government minister said once built, any plastic waste recycling factories outside of the centralised waste

park will be deemed illegal.

“The ministry plans to centralise plastic waste processing or recycling work to make it easier for us to monitor and deal with them. The way forward to manage clean plastic waste imports is to place all these plastic waste factories into a centralised waste park.

“Any factory outside of this designated area will be considered as an illegal factory,” she said during Question Time in response to Tumpat MP Che Abdullah Mat Nawī (PAS).

Zuraida said her ministry is also working closely with the Customs Department to inspect each container entering the country so that only clean plastics are allowed to be brought in.

Government backbencher Taiping MP Teh Kok Lim asked Zuraida about the Kedah government’s decision not to issue any licence for plastic waste recycling centres.

She explained that any approved permit for plastic waste imports must go through her ministry, but added that approved permits (AP) and licensing for the factory sites rests with the local authorities.

“We issue the AP licence for the import of plastic waste and before issuing it, we will inspect the site first. However, the site approval is the purview of the local councils and local authorities.

“They have the right not to grant the license for the sites,” said Zuraida.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/02/minister-centralised-hub-for-recycling-plastic-waste-in-the-pipeline/1738892>



PM: Cabinet to meet for final say on Lynas waste

Published **38 minutes ago** on **02 April 2019**

By Emmanuel Santa Maria Chin



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad speaks during a press conference on the world's largest Ship-to-Ship Transfer Hub (STS Hub) in Putrajaya April 2, 2019. — Picture by Mukhriz Hazim

PUTRAJAYA, April 2 — The Cabinet will meet to decide once and for all the federal government's stance on the management of Lynas Malaysia Sdn Bhd's radioactive waste, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said the Cabinet decision will be final, following confusion over recent conflicting statements on the rare earth refiner's waste by two other ministers.

"We will answer that when we talk with the Cabinet, where there may be differences in opinions, but it is quite normal.

"But what is determined by the Cabinet is what is official," Dr Mahathir told reporters after witnessing the signing of a joint development for a shipping hub in Johor between KA Petra Sdn Bhd and Hutchison Ports Holdings Ltd here.

Yesterday, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Redzuan said the government has yet to decide whether to send back the radioactive waste to Australia or not.

Redzuan's announcement was contrary to Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin who last December said Lynas should honour its contractual agreement to remove its water leach purification residue, before its operating licence expires on September 2.

Yeo's deputy Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis reiterated her remarks as reflective of the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry yesterday, and claimed the government had expressed interest in cooperating with their Australian counterpart to return the waste to Lynas' country of origin.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/02/pm-cabinet-to-meet-for-final-say-on-lynas-waste/1738976?>



Environmental groups urge Perak to gazette Pulau Sembilan as marine park

Published 59 minutes ago on 02 April 2019

By John Bunyan



The luminescent Blue Tears plankton that attract visitors to Pulau Lalang and Pulau Rumbia. — Malay Mail pic

IPOH, April 2 — Environmental groups today reiterated their call for the Perak government to gazette Pulau Sembilan, a cluster of islands off the coast of Bagan Datuk, as a marine park following the recent intrusion by tour operators and tourists.

Pertubuhan Pelindung Khazanah Alam Malaysia (Peka) president Puan Sri Shariffa Sabrina Syed Akil decried the open disregard for the ban on the islands.

“This is horrible. Even Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah has asked that tourists be stopped from entering the area. Why are his instructions not being respected?” she told *Malay Mail*.

“We have lost too much of our natural heritage. It’s a disaster to allow the islands to be open to the public. They should be gazetted as a marine park.”

Yesterday, Perak State Park Corporation (PSPC) general manager Mohd Shah Redza Hussein told *Malay Mail* that tour operators still bring hundreds of tourists to the islands that have been officially closed for preservation works since April 2017.

Mohd Shah said the target to reopen the islands, which was scheduled for December last year, could not be met as the PSPC decided that more time was needed to protect them after recent intrusions led to more damage.

He also said the priority now was to preserve the island cluster rather than tourism as it has the last few populations of good living reef and coral ecosystems in the Straits of Malacca and critical breeding areas for the local fish and other marine population.



Shariffa said that gazetting the islands as a marine park would attract researchers to conduct studies on the rare plankton, which emit a blue glow in the dark along its shoreline.

Echoing Shariffa, Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) field officer Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman said that bringing in researchers would be more profitable for the state government, and also better for the environment compared to tourism.

“When the islands are gazetted as a marine park, more researchers will be interested in conducting studies there. Researchers are not like tourists; they stay for months.

“When they stay for a longer period, this involves expenditure on food, accommodation, transportation to the islands and many other activities, which would benefit the local community and the state economy as well,” he explained.

“Furthermore, they understand the value of the environment and the marine life. So the chances of damage occurring on the islands would be less.”

Meor Razak said that the authorities should also beef up enforcement around the islands, including the hiring of more rangers for the state park, to stop more tourists from visiting them.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/02/environmental-groups-urge-perak-to-gazette-pulau-sembilan-as-marine-park/1738968>

malaymail

HOME/MALAYSIA

Osman: Johor to identify alternative sites for new factory hubs

Published 17 hours ago on 01 April 2019



Osman said this was aimed at preventing a recurrence of last month's chemical waste pollution in Sungai Kim Kim in Pasir Gudang. — Bernama pic

SHAH ALAM, April 1 — The Johor government is in the midst of identifying several areas suitable for the relocation of factories from the Pasir Gudang area, said Menteri Besar Datuk Osman Sapian.

He said this was aimed at preventing a recurrence of last month's chemical waste pollution in Sungai Kim

Kim in Pasir Gudang as well as to safeguard the environment in the area.

He said it was also because the state government planned to upgrade Pasir Gudang's status to a city as its population was about to breach the 600,000 mark.



“It’s not suitable for us to give that place (Pasir Gudang) permit to build factories, which may eventually spark a similar incident (like Sungai Kim Kim).”

“So, we plan to identify another area, maybe far from Pasir Gudang, that is suitable to be approved if they want to build either small or medium-sized factories there,” he said.

He said this after the winding up speech by Port Dickson MP Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim titled ‘Institutional Reforms’ at the Rise of the Asian Tiger Convention at Dewan Agung Tuanku Canselor, Universiti Teknologi Mara here today.

Elaborating, Osman said the incident occurred due to manufacturing activities that had taken place in the area for the last 30 years.

“At that time, Pasir Gudang was not as densely developed and the time was right (to set up the factories), but now it’s not suitable anymore. So, we want to relocate them to other places to safeguard the environment.

“Maybe in the Kota Tinggi area or that in Kluang or Simpang Renggam and such,” he added. — Bernama

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/01/osman-johor-to-identify-alternative-industrial-sites-post-pasir-gudang/1738753>



HOME/**LIFE**

Air pollution hotspots in Europe

Published 1 day ago on 01 April 2019



All across the continent, tens of millions of people live and work in areas where average air pollution levels are well above the maximum limits recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). — Reuters pic

PARIS, April 1 — Big cities beset with gridlocked traffic, major regions producing coal, pockets of heavy industry encased by mountains — Europe’s air pollution hotspots are clearly visible from space on most sunny weekdays.

All across the continent, tens of millions of people live and work in areas where average air pollution levels are well above the maximum limits recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

But the density and type of pollutants can vary from town to town, and sometimes from block to block, depending on whether one is next to an expressway or inside an urban island of leafy green.



That variability makes it nearly impossible to say with accuracy which of Europe's cities have the most befouled air.

But it is possible to pick out hotspot regions, and rank urban areas by type of pollutant.

Italy's Po Valley

On maps prepared by the European Environment Agency (EEA), Italy's Po Valley is covered with a wide, stain-like blotch of air pollution from the Ligurian Sea in the west to the Adriatic, held in place by the towering Alps to the north.

Many cities in the valley have among Europe's highest concentrations of dangerous microscopic particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter, known as PM2.5.

The WHO says these should not exceed, on average, 10 microgrammes per cubic metre of air (10mcg/m³) per year.

European Union standards are more lenient at 25 mcg/m³, and still several countries regularly overstep this red line.

PM2.5 is a top cause of premature deaths in the EU, some 391,000 in 2016 — 60,000 in Italy alone.

Turin and Milan, meanwhile, are also plagued by high levels of ozone and nitrogen oxides, produced mainly by petrol- and diesel-burning engines.

According to the Air Quality Life Index, maintained by researchers at the University of Chicago's Energy Policy Institute, living in the Po Valley shaves half-a-year off one's life expectancy.

Poland's coal country

Another dark spot on Europe's pollution map is southern Poland, dense with coal-fired power plants and wood-burning.

For PM2.5, Krakow was the second most congested city on the continent in 2016, with an average annual concentration of 38 mcg/m³, just ahead of Katowice.

By comparison, some areas of northern India and China are plagued with concentrations three times higher.

EAA figures for 2016 also show that Krakow and Katowice exceed the recommended annual limits of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and ozone.

Meeting WHO standards for small particle air pollution would add up to 1.5 years to people's lives in this region, the Air Quality Life Index shows.

Big cities in general

Virtually all major cities in Europe face seasonal pollution peaks or chronic air pollution due to non-electric road traffic.



According to Greenpeace, Sofia in Bulgaria boasted the highest levels of PM2.5 particulates in Europe in 2018, and placed 21st among all large cities in the world.

Close behind in the Greenpeace ranking — confirmed by EAA figures for 2016 — were Warsaw, Bucharest, Nicosia, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, Paris and Vienna.

The high number of polluted cities in central Europe is directly linked to the continuing use of coal to generate electricity, experts say.

In western Europe, many cities have NO2 levels well in excess of EU-wide standards.

London tops the list, with an average annual concentration of 89 mcg/m³, followed by Paris (83), Stuttgart (82), Munich (80), Marseille (79), Lyon (71), Athens (70) and Rome (65).

Southern Europe

Even wind-swept southern Europe has not escaped high levels of air pollution, notably ozone, which is created by a chemical reaction — triggered by sunlight — between nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds.

The highest levels are generally found along the Mediterranean in spring and summer, when hundreds of thousands of sun-seekers descend upon the region. — AFP

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/life/2019/04/01/air-pollution-hotspots-in-europe/1738459>

malaymail

HOME/MALAYSIA

Ministry uploads draft SOP on bauxite mining activities

Published 1 day ago on 01 April 2019

The 174-page draft explains in detail the entire chain of mining activities beginning from the pre-mining, during mining and post mining stages, including logistics handling and stock storage at the port. — Bernama pic

KUANTAN, April 1 — The Ministry of Water, Land and Natural Resources (KATS) has uploaded a draft of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the Pahang State Bauxite Mining Activities and Exports at its website yesterday.



The 174-page draft explains in detail the entire chain of mining activities beginning from the pre-mining, during mining and post mining stages, including logistics handling and stock storage at the port.



It encompasses the procedures in the five major networks in bauxite handling activities. They are application planning for mining rights, site management of bauxite mining and involves stockpile and port storage management.

Apart from that, it also involves transportation, enforcement and export procedures and all improvements made with various ministries, departments, and agencies.

Another provision in the draft includes transportation and enforcement methods that were previously identified as one of the elements contributing to pollution problems in Kuantan, Pahang.

For this issue, KATS has determined that each lorry involved can only carry a load not exceeding the limit and should be closed neatly to avoid any spills.

In addition, there will be only one special route for lorries transporting bauxite that will be gazetted to enable this activity to be controlled effectively. This is to ensure that they do not pass through residential areas or public areas such as mosques, crowded roads and should not exceed the weight capacity limit of the road.

Bauxite mining is carried out in three main areas namely Kota Sultan Ahmad Shah (SAS), Felda Bukit Goh and Bukit Kuantan and the Gebeng Industrial Park.

The proposed bauxite routes are SAS City to Kuantan Port; Felda Bukit Goh, Bukit Kuantan to Kuantan Port and Gebeng Industrial Area to Kuantan Port and several other routes.

More information on the draft SOP can be obtained at www.kats.gov.my website.

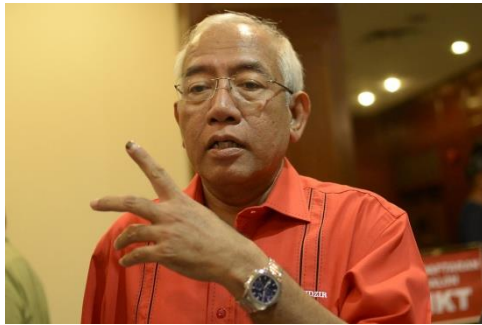
Those who wish to attend the public hearings on issues related to bauxite, to be held on April 14, can also register at the above website. — Bernama

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/01/ministry-uploads-draft-sop-on-bauxite-mining-activities/1738414>



Lynas waste conflict shows Pakatan policies unclear, Umno MP claims

Published 1 hour ago on 02 April 2019



By Azril Annuar

Mahdzir said that the government should not backtrack on any policy and avoid flip-flopping. — Picture by Mukhriz Hazim

KUALA LUMPUR, April 2 — To Padang Terap MP Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, conflicting ministerial statements on dealing with the radioactive waste by Lynas is the clearest evidence that the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government is still confused about its own policies after 11 months.

“The clearest example would be Lynas. Before the 14th general election, PH said it would shut down Lynas if it became the government.

“Today, there are two views: One supporting Lynas with a pre-condition and the other saying that Lynas must be shut down.

“That’s why I said even after 11 months of being in power, their policies are unclear,” the former education minister told reporters in Parliament today.

Mahdzir said that the government should not backtrack on any policy and avoid flip-flopping or making “U-turns”.

Yesterday, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Redzuan Yusof said the federal government has yet to decide on what to do with rare earths miner Lynas’ radioactive waste, contrary to his Cabinet colleague Yeo Bee Yin’s remark on the same matter last December.

Yeo, who is energy, science, technology, environment and climate change minister, had said then that the Australian miner must ship its waste back home.

Her remarks were reiterated by her deputy Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis yesterday, leading to confusion over the government’s stand.

However, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said his Cabinet will meet and make a final decision on Lynas’ waste.

Mahdzir also criticised ministers in Parliament for responding emotionally when answering or replying to banter during debates in the Dewan Rakyat.

“You don’t have to be emotional. That’s the norm in Parliament. You must have your backbenchers, frontliners and the Opposition. As a frontliner, a minister or deputy minister must behave,” he said.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/02/lynas-waste-conflict-shows-pakatan-policies-unclear-umno-mp-claims/1738981>



Bauxite mining: Stringent SOPs proposed

- NATION
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019
- by ong han sean



Subject to changes: A former bauxite mining site in Bukit Goh, Kuantan.

KUANTAN: A stringent set of standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been proposed for the resumption of bauxite mining in Pahang following the end of a moratorium spanning three years on the activity. Under the new draft regulations, the minimum

condition for a mining lease or proprietary mining lease application must cover an area of at least 20ha, irrespective of it being an individual lot or combination of adjacent lots.

Only applicants competent in technical and financial capabilities would be considered, and there must be a permanent mining engineer and safety, occupational health and environment officer on site.

“Financially, they must be able to prepare the capital and equipment suitable for the proposed mining method, and provide public liability insurance of up to RM1mil,” the draft SOP uploaded on the Water, Land and Natural Resources Ministry website stated.

The comprehensive draft SOP covers mining rights application planning, bauxite mining site management, stockpile and port management, transportation and enforcement methods, and exportation procedures. It also stated that all new and existing mining and stockpile sites must obtain approved environmental impact assessment, which must contain health, social and traffic impact assessments.

A rehabilitation plan must also be submitted for approval by the state mineral resources committee before any activity can begin.

The federal government ordered a halt to all bauxite mining on Jan 15, 2016, to address concerns about pollution, lack of regulation and excessive extraction by the operators. Indiscriminate and



largely unregulated bauxite mining activities caused rivers and sea water near Pantai Balok and Pantai Batu Hitam to turn “red” during heavy rainfall.

After months of public outcry, the then Natural Resources and Environment Ministry announced what was first a three-month moratorium on bauxite mining to get things under control and clean up the state. The temporary ban was then extended a few times to enable all bauxite that had been extracted to be exported and for the clean-up of all the stockpiling areas.

At the time, it was revealed that there were still about 5.4 million tonnes of bauxite stockpiled outside of Kuantan Port, with about 2.3 million tonnes at mining sites, 1.8 million tonnes in Felda areas and 1.3 million tonnes in Gebeng.

On pollution control, the draft SOP stated that operators would be required to implement environmental pollution mitigation measures at mining sites.

After mining, bauxite ore from mines located 5km from Kuantan Port must be stored in a centralised stockpile before it can be sent to the port for export.

There will be no stockpiles within the port area except for transit purposes.

The operations procedure at centralised stockpile sites was to ensure that the bauxite was received from legitimate mines and to identify transport lorries that had registered with the Pahang Lands and Mines Office.

Strict environmental pollution control measures such as netting, silt traps and washing bays must be installed at the stockpile sites.

On bauxite export, the draft SOP stated that the monthly capacity of bauxite to be handled by the Kuantan Port would be set at 600,000 tonnes.

A public hearing on the draft SOP is scheduled to be held at Dewan Jubli Perak Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah here on April 14.

Related stories:

[Bauxite miners urged to wait a bit longer to ensure smooth operations](#)

[Activist: Draft a step in the right direction](#)

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/01/stringent-sops-proposed/#u5FkowC79rPszjJL.99>



Bauxite miners urged to wait a bit longer to ensure smooth operations

- **NATION**
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019
- by **jo timbuong**

PETALING JAYA: Bauxite mining companies can afford to wait “a little longer” for the final list of standard operating procedures (SOPs) if they do not want their operations to be affected again, according to a senior official.

Pahang Mineral Operators Association vice-president Datuk Yap Soon Huat said it would be in the best interest of all to agree on the SOP rather than have public complaints resulting in disruptions.

“It’s better to take the time and properly agree on the SOP. The moratorium was implemented for three years, so what is another one or two-month wait?” he said.

Although the operators risked incurring losses due to delays, Yap described such risks as part and parcel of the business.

Yap said the public hearing was the right thing to do as it would allow everyone to agree on fair terms.

“We support what the government is doing, especially when it concerns the environment, so we want to take this chance to get the SOP right,” he said.

Malaysian Nature Society president Prof Dr Ahmad Ismail hoped the operators would have enough expertise, facilities and monitoring systems to follow the SOP and conduct environmental impact assessments at their sites.

“Monitoring and enforcement by the authorities are also important and enforcement personnel must ensure that they are equipped with the right knowledge, skills and integrity to handle the job,” he said.

Ahmad said the onus was also on the public to educate themselves on the mining processes and toxic effects they might have in order to take precautions.

“The government should reveal past experiences when it comes to bauxite mining, not to scare the public but to encourage them to help the authorities to monitor the situation.

“We cannot wait for another disaster to happen,” he said.

Bauxite is a sedimentary rock that is high in aluminium content and is the world’s main source of aluminium.

Bauxite deposits found closer to the surface are extracted using shallow, open-cut mining through open-pit methods, while those found deeper underground require underground mining methods.

However, unscrupulous mining methods can have a detrimental effect on the environment.



Neglectful acts can cause air pollution due to the dust from the mines, which can also affect drinking water sources if such methods cause harmful elements such as arsenic and mercury to leach into them.

Related stories:

[Bauxite mining: Stringent SOPs proposed](#)

[Activist: Draft a step in the right direction](#)

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/01/bauxite-miners-urged-to-wait-a-bit-longer-to-ensure-smooth-operations/#F3qiSer3QHIA6WIG.99>



Fuziah: Lynas project a threat to villagers' health

- **NATION**
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuantan MP Fuziah Salleh has lashed out at the Lynas project in Gebeng, Kuantan, saying it could affect villagers living nearby.

Fuziah claimed that after just five years of operations and dumping of radioactive waste on site, as well as the scheduled waste amounting to 1.5 million tonnes and the groundwater beneath, the site was already contaminated with heavy metals.

“This will have an effect on the villagers living around Gebeng, some of whom are still dependent on tube wells for their daily water use.

“It will also pollute the waterways around Gebeng,” she said in a statement.

“It is easy to fall for the low-level radiation narrative.

“Lynas has always been silent on the long life – 14 billion years – of thorium in the radioactive waste.

“Unfortunately, many people in the government also do not comprehend the real pertinent waste management issue.

“They are convinced by the narratives imparted to the public,” she added.

Fuziah said they welcomed foreign direct investment except for Lynas.

“However, industries that pollute and think they are above the law are not welcome in Kuantan and Pahang,” she said.



On March 24, Lynas Malaysia Radiation Safety general manager Prof Dr Ismail Bahari said there was no basis to claims that Lynas Advanced Materials Plant in Gebeng could cause a chemical waste contamination incident similar to that in Pasir Gudang, Johor. — Bernama

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/01/fuziah-lynas-project-a-threat-to-villagers-health/#pilsOdELPi7uyx0J.99>



Disposing waste with incinerators can affect people's lives and health, says renowned chemist

- **NATION**
- Tuesday, 2 Apr 2019 3:21 PM MYT
- by [sira habibu](#)



PETALING JAYA: A renowned American chemist advised authorities not to buy incinerators to dispose waste, as it can produce the most toxic nanoparticles known to man.

Prof Paul Connett, a leading international figure championing people's right to toxin-free air and water, said nanoparticles emitted during the combustion process could breach the body's natural

defence mechanism because they were ultra fine enough to penetrate membranes and directly enter the bloodstream.

"Once nanoparticles have entered the bloodstream, they can easily cross the membranes of every tissue in the body.

"The full ramifications when toxic nanoparticles enter tissues are unknown," he said in an interview.

He said this when asked to comment on the Selangor government's plan to invest RM1.5bil in systematic waste management, including utilising incinerators to convert waste to energy.

Prof Connett said it did not make economic sense to waste funds on incinerators, as Selangor already had a large sanitary landfill in Bukit Tagar that was designed to manage waste for a century.



"And why waste public funds on incinerators that could end up putting people's lives and health at stake in the long run?" he said.

Epidemiological studies worldwide had consistently demonstrated links between exposure to ambient particulate matter and adverse impact on health including increased rate of respiratory and cardiovascular illness, hospitalisations, and premature mortality, he noted.

"Some 50% of waste disposal problem could be solved immediately if the authorities seriously looked into separating waste at the source, and decompose clean organic waste to be used as fertilisers in the agricultural sector.

"This option is far more cost-effective, safe, and energy efficient, rather than relying on quick solutions to magically get rid of garbage by using incinerators without taking into consideration its far-reaching implications on public health and the environment," he said.

Prof Connett, who is one of the founders of zero-waste solution, had travelled around the world to teach local communities on his 10-step solution to reduce garbage to zero.

The steps are source separation, door-to-door collection, composting, recycling, community centres to promote repair and re-use, waste reduction initiatives, economic incentives, residual separation and research centre, promoting industrial responsibility, and providing temporary landfill.

Prof Connett said farmers in Italy were the ones who had initiated door-to-door collection of clean organic waste for composting purposes.

Clean organic waste could be dumped at vermiculture sites where worms are cultivated to help convert organic waste into fertiliser.

Prof Connett will also give a talk on "Zero Waste Management" at 8pm on Wednesday (April 3) and "Do We Need Incinerator" at 10am on April 6 at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.

The events are jointly organised by the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall social-economic committee and KL Taknak Insinerator (KTI).

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/02/disposing-waste-with-incinerators-can-affect-peoples-lives-and-health-says-renowned-chemist/#43Oz7McYlmihzOq0.99>



Asean leaders shrug off pollution to focus on regional issues

- [ASEAN+](#)
- Tuesday, 2 Apr 2019

BANGKOK: Thailand will not cancel the 23rd Asean Finance Ministers' Meeting in Chiang Rai this week despite that province and others in the North being in the grip of severe air pollution for several consecutive days, an official at the Finance Ministry said.

The regional ministers will highlight cooperation in using more local currency for trade settlement and investment, cross-border electronics payment, digital-asset oversight and cybersecurity in financial transactions.

"Everything required for the meeting has been well arranged so we can't cancel it," Lavaron Sangs-nit, director-general of the Fiscal Policy Office, said yesterday.

The Asean Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting runs tomorrow through Friday.

About 300 representatives from the 10 Asean countries plus East Asia and the US will attend, along with business leaders from Asean and Europe. The ministry had not expected the pollution in the northern provinces to worsen in the past few days, the result of a spreading forest fire.

He said closed-door meetings would shield the participants from exposure to the pollution and air purifiers would be installed in the meeting rooms.

Thailand is chairing the 10-nation Asean this year and is pushing the theme "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability".

The Asean ministers will discuss three key areas of cooperation: connectivity, sustainability and resilience, said Lavaron.

Asean aims to implement connectivity in financing, payment and services to facilitate cross-border electronic payments.

It will also promote local-currency settlements to reduce dependence on the US dollar and lower exchange-rate risks from swings in the value of the dollar.

Cybersecurity will be raised with an eye to training Asean officials to deal with online threats to the financial sector. — The Nation/Asia News Network

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2019/04/02/asean-leaders-shrug-off-pollution-to-focus-on-regional-issues/#eCcgiGYJzdcJePZ.99>



Worsening air pollution reducing lifespans

- ASEAN+
- Tuesday, 2 Apr 2019



Cause for concern: According to the researchers, sustained high concentrations of particulate matter in the air people breathe will cut 2.3 years from lifespans in Jakarta. — AP

JAKARTA: Indonesia's air quality has deteriorated from among the cleanest in the world to one of

the most polluted over the past two decades, shaving five years from life expectancy in some regions, researchers say.

The study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago says an increase in coal-fired power stations, burning of land for plantation agriculture and rising car ownership are responsible for the worsening pollution in the world's fourth-most populous country.

The greatest spike happened in the last few years with air pollution more than doubling between 2013 and 2016, it said.

The burden on public health has become one of the highest in the world, behind only India, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"In 1998, air pollution barely impacted the life expectancy of Indonesians. In fact, even in 2013, it shaved only a few months off of average life expectancy."

According to the researchers, sustained high concentrations of particulate matter in the air people breathe will cut 2.3 years from lifespans in the capital Jakarta.

On the islands of Sumatra and Borneo, both of which suffer land fires every year, the expected reduction in lifespans is four years on average.

It rises to 4.8 years for the southern Sumatran city of Palembang and 5.6 years for its neighbouring Ogan Komering Ilir district.



Indonesia's annual dry season fires were particularly disastrous in 2015, burning 2.6 million hectares of land and spreading health-damaging haze across Indonesia, Singapore, southern Thailand and Malaysia.

The World Bank estimated the fires cost Indonesia US\$16bil (RM65bil) and a Harvard and Columbia study estimated the haze hastened 100,000 deaths in the region.

Less arid weather conditions resulted in reduced areas of land burning in the following three years though the area burned jumped again last year to more than 510,000ha.

The University of Chicago study said the air pollution effects are widespread.

Small particles carried by the wind from land fires at times contribute 31% of Jakarta's "PM2.5" – tiny particles that cause haze when levels are elevated and which are linked to lung cancer, respiratory illness and other diseases.

Citing the experience of cities such as London, Osaka and Los Angeles in reducing disastrous air pollution and China's more recent progress, the researchers said Indonesia's pollution problem is "solvable" through stricter regulation and stronger enforcement. — AP

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2019/04/02/worsening-air-pollution-reducing-lifespans/#5Tb2oC7x9JzXOQFk.99>



DoE completes final draft on forming panel

- **NATION**
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019
- by **remar nordin**

PASIR GUDANG: The Department of Environment (DoE) has completed its final draft for the forming of the Toxic Waste Management and Scheduled Waste National Committee following the chemical spill at Sungai Kim Kim.

Its director-general Datuk Dr Ahmad Kamarulnajib Che Ibrahim said the draft would be sent to the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry for approval.

"We have completed the draft. We will present it to the ministry as soon as possible for them to make the final decision.

"The committee will be responsible for any future toxic waste management," he said during a visit to SMK Taman Pasir Putih here yesterday.

He also stressed that the air quality in Pasir Gudang was back back to normal, but the DoE would continue to monitor the condition of Sungai Kim Kim.



State DOE director Datuk Dr Mohammad Ezanni Mat Salleh said DoE was currently searching for factories responsible for dumping toxic waste into Sungai Selangkah here.

These factories, he said, had taken advantage of a high tide by releasing their waste into the river during the rainy season.

“We have identified 113 factories along Sungai Selangkah within a radius of 10km.

“We have identified 20 to 30 factories which are potential suspects,” Mohammad Ezanni said, adding that DoE had yet to establish if the toxic waste that polluted Sungai Selangkah was the same type dumped into Sungai Kim Kim.

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/01/doe-completes-final-draft-on-forming-panel/#4TGkEmyDcSVMb3cf.99>



Many people still wearing face masks

- **NATION**
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019
- by **remar nordin**

PASIR GUDANG: The Sungai Kim Kim pollution has eased up but that has not stopped many people, especially schoolchildren, from wearing face masks to protect themselves from any lingering toxic fumes.

Schools in and around here have reopened following the end of the pollution and the one-week school holiday.

Checks at SMK Pasir Gudang 2 here found that many students and parents were still wearing face masks despite the Department of Environment’s assurance that the air quality is back to normal.

Among them was Nur Syazwani Husaini, who was earlier warded at Hospital Sultanah Aminah (HSA) after she complained of nausea.

“My class is on the third floor. It was windy and there was a sudden strong smell.

“I have asthma, so I had difficulty breathing. Each time I took a breath, I could feel a burning sensation,” she recounted when met at the school here yesterday.

Another student, Nur Aishah Rusman, said it was a scary experience to see her friends, teachers and school staff being affected by the toxic fumes.



“A teacher brought me to the quarantine room. It was full of my schoolmates lying around and crying due to the pain.

“My parents actually did not want me to go to school because they were afraid that the toxic fumes might come back,” she added.

Johor Islamic Affairs and Education Committee chairman Aminolhuda Hassan said 355 students from around here had submitted their applications for the Takaful Pelajar Sekolah Malaysia (TPSM) claim.

He said it involved students who were sent to hospital wards. Each student would be paid RM25 a day for the duration of their time in the hospital.

“All students in the country are covered by TPSM,” Aminolhuda added.

SMK Pasir Gudang 2 was one of the 111 schools that were shut down following the third wave of toxic gas pollution caused by a chemical substance that had been dumped into Sungai Kim Kim on March 6.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said students still traumatised by the toxic fumes would go for counselling sessions.

He said the Welfare Department and HSA’s psychiatric unit would be conducting the sessions starting today.

“It will be done in stages, starting with two to three weeks depending on the trauma level of the student,” he said after visiting SMK Pasir Gudang 1 yesterday.

He added that all 111 schools had reopened.

Aminolhuda said the affected students would have to catch up on their studies to prepare for upcoming examinations and that the schools need not hold replacement classes.

“Examinations will not be postponed.

I believe the teachers are experienced in handling the learning procedures.

“We expect them to complete the syllabus to ensure that students are prepared to take the exams,” he said.

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/01/many-people-still-wearing-face-masks/#6KRIsMmg7ZxUIBKd.99>



Nations step up to fight smog

- [ASEAN+](#)
- Monday, 1 Apr 2019

Hong Kong: As billions of people in Asia choke under polluted skies, authorities have turned to water-dispersing drones and outdoor air purifiers to improve air quality, while companies have tried to cash in by selling everything from canned air to lung-purifying teas.

Around 92% of the population in the Asia Pacific region are exposed to levels of air pollution that pose a significant risk to their health, according to UN Environment.

Here is a look at some of the ways those living under the haze try to limit its effects.

Spraying water

But tools such as water cannons have been criticised as having little effect and being a “band-aid” solution that distracts from root causes.

New Delhi – the world’s most polluted major city – tried in 2017 to use helicopters to sprinkle water over the city, but the choppers were not able to fly due to low visibility caused by smog.

An attempt by South Korea to create artificial rain to tackle air pollution in January failed, after an aircraft sent to seed clouds with silver iodide only produced several minutes of misty rain.

Outdoor air purifiers

The northern Chinese city of Xi’an is experimenting with a giant air purifier the size of an industrial smokestack which can reduce PM2.5 concentration by 15% within 10sq km, according to researchers.

Hong Kong this year opened a 3.7km tunnel equipped with an air purification system touted as the largest of its kind in the world in terms of volume of air handled – 5.4 million cubic metres of vehicle exhaust every hour.

The government says it will be able to remove at least 80% of harmful particulates and nitrogen dioxide using large fans which suck exhaust into air purification plants in three ventilation buildings along the tunnel.

‘Smog refugees’

During particularly bad spates of air pollution, which tend to come during the winter, many residents in smoggy Chinese cities escape to cleaner places, such as resorts in the south of the country, for a temporary break and return after it has cleared.

Ctrip, China’s largest online travel agent, estimated in 2016 that every year, over a million residents of smoggy cities such as Beijing and Shanghai leave the country to escape the smog.



Popular destinations for these so-called “smog refugees” include places such as Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Some even travel to Antarctica on “lung-cleansing trips,” according to Ctrip.

Commercial remedies

Although experts say residents in smoggy cities are unlikely to see health effects from breathing bottled air, that hasn’t stopped entrepreneurs from selling them canisters of the stuff from New Zealand, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland.

For about US\$22 (RM89), consumers can order an 8 litre can of Banff Air from the popular tourist spot in Canada, or pay US\$125 (RM509) for a jar of air from the British countryside.

In China, “anti-smog” teas are promoted by vendors as a way to clean the lungs, while Mongolian residents drink “oxygen cocktails” - made by spraying oxygen into glasses of juice using machines or cans of air.

Advertisements boast that “drinking just one oxygen cocktail is equal to a three-hour-walk in a lush forest”, despite no scientific evidence they protect from pollution. — AFP

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2019/04/01/nations-step-up-to-fight-smog/#cgtqZZi4EvtfOmMQ.99>



- Home
- World

5 minute read

Thai junta chief demands action to cut smog

By **AFP** - April 2, 2019 @ 7:46pm

CHIANG MAI, Thailand: Thailand's junta chief gave the smog-hit northern city of Chiang Mai seven days to crack down on spiralling pollution Tuesday, which has seen the tourist hotspot choke on Asia's most toxic air this week.

The city has far eclipsed other notorious pollution hotspots since Sunday, with the level of dangerous microscopic particles known as PM2.5 peaking at 480 according to the Air Quality Index. Any level over 300 is classed as "hazardous."

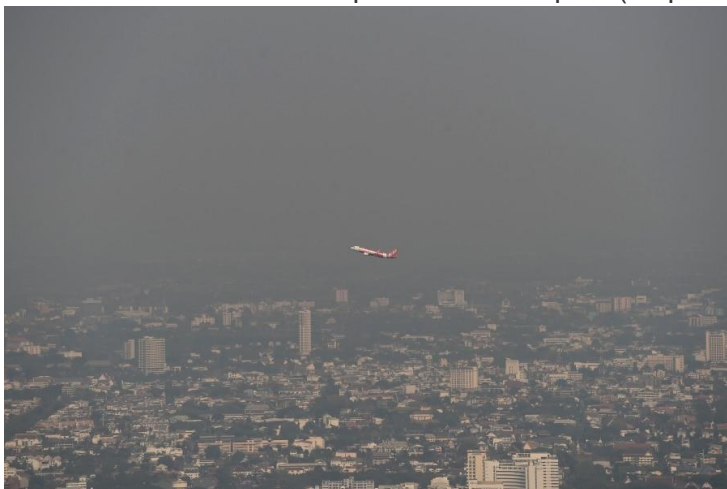
By contrast, the smog-hit Indian capital New Delhi peaked at 228, while Beijing reached only 161.

The pollution crisis in Chiang Mai has seen residents, street vendors and even monks donning surgical face masks and at least two universities have cancelled classes.

Crop burning during the dry season has long been blamed for poor air quality, but the smog has been exacerbated by growing industrialisation and rising numbers of vehicles on the roads.

Prayut Chan-O-Cha, on a visit to Chiang Mai, demanded a clampdown on crop burning.

"I want to reiterate that the problem of hotspots (crop burning areas) must be solved in seven days," said the junta leader, who is angling to become the elected civilian prime minister.



A commercial plane flies over the smog-covered city in the northern Thai province of Chiang Mai. -AFP

"Nobody should ignite fires in the forest," he said.

Crop burning is normally restricted for two months in the dry season to try to curb

pollution, but it remains widespread.

However, Olivier Evrard, a Thailand-based specialist for the Institute of Research for Development, said crop burning was not the only culprit.



“The government has encouraged the population to buy more vehicles and coal plants are still running at full speed,” Evrard said.

A total of nine provinces are affected by the smog as the northern city of Chiang Rai prepares to host a meeting of regional finance ministers.

The seasonal duration of the haze, which used to last for about three months, has now increased to six months, according to Chaicharn Pothirat, a lung disease specialist at Chiang Mai University’s Faculty of Medicine.

The long-term effects include an increase in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, he said, adding that he is sceptical the government has any “long-term plan” good enough to tackle the problem.

“They show reporters, they fly to Chiang Mai ... but ... it does not clearly improve the situation,” Chaicharn told AFP.

Earlier this year, the Thai capital Bangkok was also hit by bad smog, which led to school closures for three days.-AFP



- Home
- News
- Nation

3 minute read

Govt wants to collaborate with Australia on Lynas waste



Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry wants to collaborate with the Australian government to ensure waste from Lynas Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Lynas) is sent to Australia. Pix by NSTP/Farizul Hafiz Awang

By **Bernama** - April 1, 2019 @ 3:53pm

KUALA LUMPUR: The Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Ministry wants to collaborate with the Australian government to ensure waste from Lynas Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Lynas) is sent to Australia, the Dewan Rakyat was told today.



Deputy Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Isnaraissah Munirah Majilis said the collaboration involves finding ways to remove the water leached purification (WLP) waste produced by the Lynas factory to be sent to Australia before September this year.

“Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister (Yeo Bee Yin) has written a letter to her Australian counterpart last Feb 26 to inform about the collaboration to facilitate removal of the waste from Malaysia to Australia,” she said.

She was responding to a question by Wong Chen (PKR-Subang) on measures by the government to ensure Lynas waste is sent to Australia.

Isnaraissah Munirah said at the same time a task force set up by the government was identifying suitable international procedures and instruments involved in the process of removing the WLP residue.

It will take into account all legal, public and workers’ safety and the environment, she added. -
Bernama

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/474960/govt-wants-collaborate-australia-lynas-waste>