

A bauxite stockpiling site in Kuantan. In the foreground, a lorry stirs up a plume of red bauxite dust. Pic by Luqman Hakim Zubir



New guidelines on bauxite mining soon

END TO 'RED SEA':

Mining law revamp will end negative environmental impact, says minister

GOH PEI PEI
KUCHING

news@nst.com.my

THE Natural Resources and Environment Ministry is drawing up new guidelines for bauxite mining and stockpiling sites to reduce the impact on the environment.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar, said current laws were not sufficient to resolve the bauxite mining issue in

Kuantan and there was a need to review laws covering the mining industry.

"We need new laws to combat the problems and human attitudes. We need new guidelines on mining sites, transportation and stockpiling areas.

"We need operators to comply with the laws, including building special drainage areas complete with filters to ensure the red dust will not flow into the rivers and sea. We are looking forward to a more systematic method to handle the process, including waste products.

"Once we have completed our studies, we will have a meeting with the Pahang government on the amendments.

"We can't afford to let the sea turn red again," said Wan Junaidi after a briefing session with Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem at Wisma Bapa Malaysia here yesterday.

He said under the 10th Malaysia Plan, about RM457 million was allocated to Sarawak for it to implement 19 projects under the Forestry and Drainage and Irrigation Departments.

"About 94 per cent of the projects have been completed. The rest are expected to be completed by the end of this year. I'm satisfied with the results, which show the close cooperation between the Federal Government and state agencies."

He said 56 projects for Sarawak, costing RM2.1 billion, had been proposed under the 11th Malaysia Plan.

"After meeting with officials of relevant ministries, departments and agencies in Sarawak, we have outlined 56 potential projects that I hope will receive grant approvals as they will benefit the state and its people in the next five years," he said.