

The Kuantan Bauxite Debacle

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In January 2014, Indonesia banned the export of raw bauxite mined in their country. The Chinese, who were buying from them, have to look for alternate sources, and prompted miners in Malaysia to mine the bauxite deposit found in and around the Kuantan area. Mining started around the middle of 2014 and it flourished into an extremely busy hive of activities, with more than 50 miners mining the bauxite and more than a thousand trailer lorries carrying the bauxite to Kuantan Port for export. This resulted in Malaysia becoming the world's largest exporter of raw bauxite to China then. However,

this mining activity became an environmental issue highlighted in the media by academia, NGOs, politicians and the local residents. With so much hue and cry, the authorities stepped in and imposed a moratorium to stop all the bauxite mining activity in January 2016. Till today one and a half years later, this ban is still in effect.

This presentation summarizes the various aspects of this debacle from the geology and mineralization of the Kuantan bauxite deposit to its exploration and evaluation, mining and haulage; and the many battles between the miners and the people against them.