PRESS CUTTINGS

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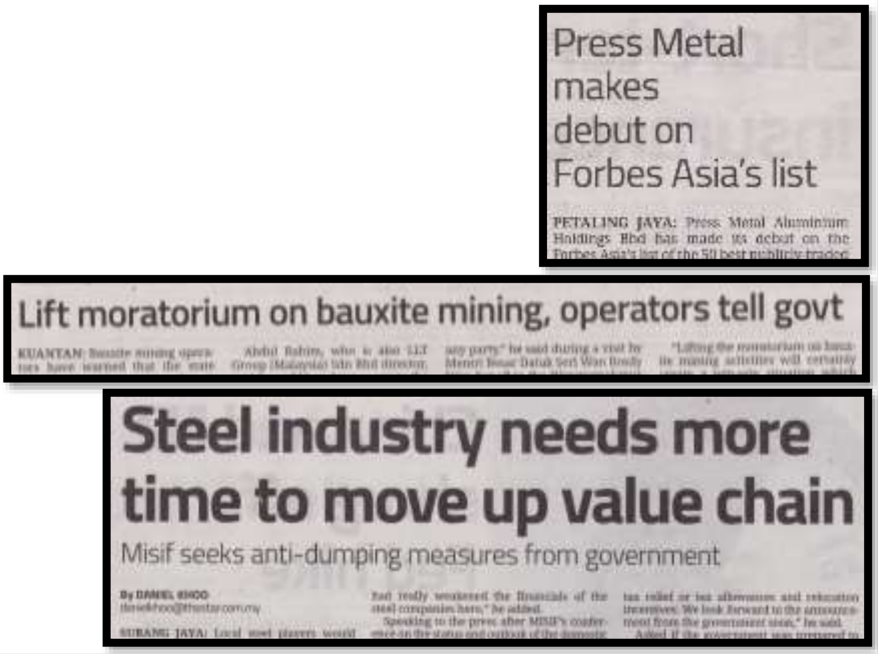
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Part 1:

METALLIC COMMODITIES

Source : StarBiz
Date : 03 September 2018 (Monday)

Uranium set for best run since 2014 as miners buy after halts

HONG KONG: Uranium is heading for its longest run of monthly gains since November 2014 as global supply tightens after mine closures and as producers and investors boost purchases in the spot market.

Spot uranium is up 2.1% this month, set for a fourth monthly advance, and has climbed more than 30% since hitting a low in April.

A decline in supply and boost in demand has helped underpin a price increase, according to Ux Consulting Co, a provider of research on the nuclear industry. Further gradual gains are seen through the remainder of the year, Ux said.

"Whether we get as high as US$30 by year-end remains to be seen, but that would likely be the next psychological barrier," Ux President Jonathan Hinze said by email.

"Market participants are expecting further price increases and some buyers are trying to get ahead of any future increases."

Kazakhstan, the world's biggest producer, is cutting output further this year, while Australia's Paladin Energy Ltd and Canada's Cameco Corp have halted operations, with Cameco seeking uranium in the spot market to fulfill contract obligations.

Yellow Cake Plc, a venture created this year to purchase and hold the fuel, this month said it had increased its stockpile to 8.4 million pounds.— Bloomberg

Source : TheStar **Date : 04 September 2018 (Tuesday)**

Lift moratorium on bauxite mining, operators tell govt

KUANTAN: Bauxite mining operators have warned that the state government will experience heavier losses if the moratorium on mining activities is further extended.

Pahang Mineral Operators Association adviser Datuk Seri Abdul Rahim Abdul says the losses include job opportunities, revenue from bauxite mining royalties, taxes, related development and economic spillover.

Abdul Rahim, who is also LLT Group (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd director, said it would be a huge waste to the country if the ore was not mined for economic purposes.

"Currently, the bauxite mining operators have roughly lost RM20mil since the moratorium started in 2016.

"The longer the moratorium continues, more losses will be incurred and it will be a lose-lose situation to any party," he said during a visit by Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail to the Wangsamakmur Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd stockpile site in Gebeng here yesterday.

Wan Rosdy also opened WM Geolab (M) Sdn Bhd during his visit.

The company is a bauxite mining operator under the LLT Group.

Abdul Rahim said all operators must ensure lorries ferrying the mineral did not pollute the road.

"Lifting the moratorium on bauxite mining activities will certainly create a win-win situation which will benefit the operators, state and federal governments.

"The state government charges RM8 in royalty for one tonne of bauxite and miners export millions of tonnes.

"In fact, there are still many areas which have yet to be dug for the ore," he said.

Source : StarBiz **Date : 06 September 2018 (Thursday)**

US steel workers seek payout from trade war as prices rise

NEW YORK: US steel workers are ready to get their payout from the trade war.

Labor contracts with US Steel Corp and ArcelorMittal expired Sept 1, but workers remain on the job as negotiations over wage increases continue.

On Tuesday, US Steel posted on its website a proposed six-year contract, offering workers guaranteed annual wage increases and a US$15,000 pre-tax cash payment, including a minimum profit-sharing of US$6,000 for the balance of the year, regardless of the company performance.

The company;s proposal is far from fair, and it's public characterisation of that proposal is far from factual, United Steelworkers, known as USW, said in a statement emailed after US Steel publicly announced its offer.

"They're trying to buy a long-term, very cheap deal with some up-front money to distract workers from the long-term costs."

Workers are insisting on their share of the windfall from the 36% increase in the benchmark hot-rolled coil price this year after President Donald Trump imposed a 25% tariffs on steel imports.

While companies have reported that demand will remain strong through the rest of 2018, US Steel's share price has declined 17% this year amid analyst downgrades and concerns about long-term pricing.

Workers have gone without a wage increase in the past three years, USW said in a statement. Negotiations with US Steel cover more than 16,000 workers in 24 local unions, while those with ArcelorMittal involve about 15,000 workers from 13 localities.

Since the current labor contract includes profit-sharing, it's unlikely that a strike will occur, KeyBanc Capital Markets research analyst Phil Gibbs said in a telephone interview before US Steel announced its offer to its workers.

"USW members at USS locations this week will be conducting informational meetings prior to taking strike authorization votes," Wayne Ranick, a union spokesman, said in an email Tuesday, prior to the announcement from Pittsburgh-based US Steel.

"The USW committee will meet with our ArcelorMittal membership at all locations to discuss the next steps," he said.

"If the committee determines that strike authorisation is needed to achieve a fair contract, the members will vote after they have been given a chance to ask questions and review information with their elected local and international leaders."— Bloomberg

Source : StarBiz
Date : 07 September 2018 (Friday)

Press Metal makes debut on Forbes Asia's list

PETALING JAYA: Press Metal Aluminium Holdings Bhd has made its debut on the Forbes Asia's list of the 50 best publicly-traded big companies in the Asia-Pacific.

The aluminium producer, which was included in the 30-stock FBM KLCI in December last year, made it into the Fabulous 50 list with a market capitalisation of US$4.7bil, alongside Batu Kawan Bhd, which is making an appearance on the list for the fourth straight year.

Press Metal is placed at number 45, while Batu Kawan charts at number 44.

Press Metal, started by chief executive officer Tan Sri Koon Poh Keong and his six brothers, generated US$2bil in annual revenue with a net profit of US$138mil last year.

The company is helmed by brothers Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian, who is the CEO, and Lee Hau Hian, who is the managing director.

Forbes said in a statement that China once again topped the 50 best publicly traded big companies in the Asia-Pacific with a record 30 listees, including business giants such as Alibaba and Tencent.

Tencent's net profit soared 71% last year to US$10.6bil, while Alibaba's climbed 49% to US$9.7bil.

This would be their 10th and third year appearing on the list, respectively.

"Tencent is currently investing in startups to hatch new services for its core businesses such as the budget-shopping service Pinduoduo, or PDD," the statement said, adding that the investment would help boost the company-owned WeChat app.

There are 17 new listees this year.

As to the selection, the Fab 50 companies are determined from a pool of 1,744 public companies in the region with at least US$2bil in annual revenue and have been listed for at least a year.

The goal is to highlight well-run entrepreneurial outfits, and the region's best of the best.

Companies are then analysed according to more than a dozen financial measures.

The list excludes companies that have a high debt ratio, are more than 50% state-owned or more than 50%-owned by listed parents.

Source : StarBiz
Date : 18 September 2018 (Tuesday)

Copper wilts as trade war angst spurs fresh losses for metals

SHANGHAI: Industrial metals including copper opened the week with steep losses on concern the US-China trade war is set to get much worse, with President Donald Trump prepared to hit the mainland with another round of levies, damping prospects for demand in the world's largest consumer.

Nickel lead the retreat, tumbling as much as 3.2% to US$12,250 a tonne on London Metal Exchange before trading at US$12,350 at 9:57 am in Shanghai. Copper declined 1.4% to US$5,892.50, while aluminum sank 1.2%.

In Shanghai, contracts were mostly lower, with zinc down 1.7%.

Metals have been under pressure for months as the US-led trade war fans concern that the showdown will slow growth and sap consumption, while boosting the dollar.

President Trump instructed aides to proceed with tariffs on an additional US$200bil in Chinese products despite his Treasury Secretary's attempt to restart talks, people familiar with the matter said last Friday.

That may prompt Beijing to decline the offer of negotiations, the Wall Street Journal said.

Chinese investors are "panicking" on the trade war news, according to Wang Yue, an analyst at Shanghai East Asia Futures Co.

That's adding to concerns about the outlook for demand in China following bearish data last week, said Wang, referring to figures on investment in fixed assets and infrastructure.

The US public comment period for the tariffs on US$200bil in Chinese goods has closed, and any new round would be in addition to levies on US$50bil in goods already in place.

Last week, Goldman Sachs Group Inc said it saw scope for further losses in metals, despite its view that they are already oversold. — Bloomberg

Source : StarBiz
Date : 19 September 2018 (Wednesday)

US gives China's rare earths reprieve

BEIJING: The United States did not include rare earth elements, metals used in magnets, radars and consumer electronics, from its final list of tariffs on US$200bil of Chinese goods, underscoring its reliance on China for the strategic minerals.

China is the world's largest producer of rare earths and the biggest supplier to the United States, according the US Geological Survey.

Rare earth elements and minor metals have broad applications in US industry, ranging from jet engines to mobile phones to oil and gas drilling. Most of the minerals the US had originally targeted for tariffs were on a list of 35 minerals published by the US Department of the Interior in May that were deemed critical to the country's security and economic prosperity.

Rare earth metals and their compounds, as well as mixtures of rare earth oxides or chlorides, were all included on a provisional list of tariffs on Chinese goods unveiled by the Office of the US Trade Representative in July.

However, the final list released on Monday does not mention rare earths. — Reuters

Source : TheStar
Date : 27 September 2018 (Thursday)

Committee promises fair review of Lynas rare earth plant

By ONG HAN SEAN
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KUANTAN: A fair review of the Lynas rare earth refinery is one that looks out for the best interest of Kuantan residents, says Lynas evaluation committee chairman Fuziah Salleh.

Lynas had nothing to worry about if it had complied with regulatory requirements, she said, adding that those requirements were consistent with the best practices of radioactive waste management that Pakatan Harapan believed in.

"They should only worry if there is bending of rules by the previous government to accommodate them (Lynas) for whatever reasons, or if there exists non-compliance to requirements stipulated in the safety standards set out by the government and those requirements are modified later," she said when contacted yesterday.

Fuziah, who is Kuantan MP and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, was made the chairman of a Lynas evaluation committee last week.

Responding to Lynas' statement that her appointment would "raise concerns" since she was known as a "long-time anti-Lynas campaigner", she said: "I cannot deny that I have views that oppose Lynas, but this is not an independent panel.

"I am representing the Pakatan government, specifically the Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister, and we have every right to look into Lynas' records from day one.

"I am here not just as an anti-Lynas campaigner, otherwise the minister would not have appointed me as the chairman. The minister needed someone with comprehensive knowledge of the matter.

"If this was an independent panel, my appointment would be an issue, but this is an executive committee. We are now in a position to examine Lynas," she said.

Asked if Lynas could expect a fair review due to her stance, Fuziah said the benchmark should be finding the best outcome for the people of Kuantan.

"What is fair is what is the best policy for the people of Kuantan. They do not deserve a plant with radioactive waste in their backyard," she said.

On the scope of the review, she said the committee would be looking at the previous government's policies regarding Lynas.

"We are going to open the files and find out what happened to those plans of managing the rare earth waste processing. The previous government said it would be sent back, then the plan changed to a permanent disposal facility and now Lynas wants to recycle its waste.

"We want to know what happened in between all those plans," said Fuziah.

The committee is made up of 10 members who are experts in public health, chemical process engineering and international law, among others. It will hold its first meeting today.

Source : StarBiz **Date : 28 September 2018 (Friday)**

Steel industry needs more time to move up value chain

Misif seeks anti-dumping measures from government

By **DANIEL KHOO**
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SUBANG JAYA: Local steel players would need more time to move up the value chain to produce more elaborate steel outputs that are used in heavy industries, said the Malaysian Iron and Steel Industry Federation's (Misif) president Datuk Lim Hong Thye.

"We had two companies before that used to produce hot rolled coils (HRC) but both of these companies stopped production due to various reasons.

"To produce HRC, you will need bigger economies of scale while the technology involved to produce HRC is also more complicated than construction steel (rebar)," Lim said.

"We need time to learn how to produce the higher grade products such as automotive steel and oil & gas industry grade steel. Unfortunately due to various issues such as internal: company issues and also external such as the 2013-2015 dumping from China had really weakened the financials of the steel companies here," he added.

Speaking to the press after MISIF's conference on the status and outlook of the domestic iron and steel industry, Lim said he hoped the government will be able to come up with a holistic approach to ensure the basic needs of the industries are taken care off.

"We are not asking for full protection but certain measures need to be put into place in case of a predatory price dumping from foreign imports happen and try to kill of the local industry.

"Then they will need to step in otherwise this industry will not grow," he said.

In his speech to industry players earlier, Lim said that the steel industry and the government shares the same aspiration that industry consolidation is key in enhancing the industry's competitiveness to create a sustainable steel sector.

"We hope that the government could seriously consider and expedite the process by providing the incentives, either in the form of tax relief or tax allowances and relocation incentives. We look forward to the announcement from the government soon," he said.

Asked if the government was prepared to give incentives to industries to move up the value chain in the face of Industry 4.0, deputy minister of international trade and industry affairs Ong Kian Ming said that the details of this will be outlined in the upcoming Budget 2019.

He also said that the government was monitoring the US-China trade war for possible dumping of steel products in Malaysia.

"There is also this possibility of other countries using Malaysia as a transshipment point. All these cannot be ruled out as it will have detrimental effects to the country and including to the steel industry," Ong said.

"If people dump here then our local players will be affected.

If Malaysia is used as a transshipment point then there will be anti-dumping measures enacted against Malaysian steel companies by other countries against us," he added.

Part 2:

ENERGY MINERAL (COAL)

Source : StarBiz **Date : 21 September 2018 (Friday)**

Indonesia to coax exporters to convert US dollar

JAKARTA: Indonesia's finance minister says the government aims to "persuade" exporters to keep earnings onshore and convert them into rupiah, rather than make this mandatory, amid confusion over a plan floated by another minister.

On Tuesday, Trade Minister Enggartiasto Lukita said authorities intended to make it mandatory for exporters of commodities such as palm oil, coal, oil and natural gas to keep half of their proceeds onshore for at least six months and convert them to rupiah.

The measure was intended to boost onshore dollar supply, Lukita said, because portfolio outflows had drained it at a time imports were rising, sending the rupiah to its weakest since the 1998 Asian financial crisis.

Also on Tuesday, another trade ministry official said the finance ministry or the central bank would come up with a regulation on export earnings' conversion.

But lobby groups for exporters argue that such a measure would hurt their business.

And a Bank Indonesia deputy governor told *Reuters* on Tuesday the central bank had no such plan.

Asked about Lukita's remarks, Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati told reporters "I am hoping earnings can be saved onshore and converted to rupiah."

She said authorities had talked to some companies holding US dollars to "persuade" them to convert to rupiah, including mining companies who she said paid contractors with dollars.

Ido Hutabarat, chairman of the Indonesia Mining Association, said retaining and converting export revenue would put pressure on the cashflows of commodity exporters, especially for those needing to repay offshore debt and buy imported equipment.

Togar Sitanggang, deputy chairman of the Indonesia Palm Oil Association, said some producers might opt to reduce exports and sell as much palm oil as they could domestically.

"Rather than export, they will try hard to sell domestically, because by doing so they don't have to deposit 50% of their revenue," he said.

President Joko Widodo has repeatedly asked exporters to exchange their US dollar earnings, trying to appeal to nationalistic sentiment.

Indonesia has seen an ongoing debate over how to push exporters to keep earnings onshore locally, with some analysts pointing to equivalent rules in Malaysia and Thailand, though others argue that such measures would go against Indonesia's free foreign-exchange regime.

Malaysia has required exporters to convert 75% of earnings to ringgit since 2016, while Thai exporters must keep export proceeds above a certain amount in authorised banks for 360 days. — Reuters

Part 3:
GENERAL

Source : TheStar
Date : 19 September 2018 (Wednesday)

Nuke power a no-go in M'sia

PM: Radioactive waste hard to manage as we previously discovered

By HEMANANTHANI SIVANANDAM
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KUALA LUMPUR: The use of nuclear power as an alternative to generate electricity is a no-go, under the current administration.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia is against nuclear power being used to produce electricity as science has not been able to provide a safe way to dispose of the radioactive waste generated.

He said although nuclear plants are a cheap alternative to fossil fuels for producing electricity, they are still not safe.

"A lot of people wanted to have nuclear power when I stepped down but I am against it as it generates radiation.

"We produce tin and *amang* (tin tailings, which has heavy metals), a substance that was used to produce colour televisions. Later, people found other ways to produce colour TVs without using *amang*.

"*Amang* has to be activated to be useful but is radioactive.

"When companies no longer wanted it, we were left with activated *amang* residue," he said in his keynote address at the Conference of the Electric Power Supply Industry (CEPSI 2018) event yesterday.

Also present were Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Minister Yeo Bee Yin and Tenaga Nasional Berhad chairman Tan Sri Leo Moggie.

Dr Mahathir said the government then had to find measures to ensure the *amang* residue would not cause harm and it was then buried in a 1km square area under thick cement to contain any radiation leak.

"We lost a big piece of land because it was not safe for it to be used. So that was our experience with radioactive materials," he added.

The Prime Minister said it taught the then administration that radioactive waste was not easily disposed of, adding that even science has not found a good way to manage such wastes.

"That is why we decided not to use nuclear power in Malaysia. That was the policy during my time as the fourth PM; it was not the policy for the fifth and sixth prime minister but now I am back," he quipped.

Giving an example of Japan, Dr Mahathir said the country often faced problems with radiation during earthquakes.

He said that some people living in areas with nuclear plants do not go back due to the radiation.

Dr Mahathir also cited the Chernobyl disaster as an example.

Towards a better future: Moggie delivering his speech during CEPSI 2018 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre as Dr Mahathir and Yeo look on.

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