



8-9 APRIL 2019 (MON-TUE)



MALAYSIA

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POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Update

Wesfarmers reiterates Lynas offer, says could ease conditions

Reuters/Reuters

April 09, 2019 12:11 pm +08



BENGALURU (April 9): Australia's Wesfarmers Ltd said on Tuesday it is still interested in acquiring Lynas Corp Ltd and could table a less conditional bid for the only major producer of rare earth elements outside China.

An initial offer of A\$1.5 billion (\$1.1 billion) by the retail-to-chemicals conglomerate was previously rebuffed by Lynas' board, which termed the deal "highly conditional".

"Wesfarmers remains open to engage with the Lynas Board on our proposal, with a view to progressing a less conditional proposal," Managing Director Rob Scott said in a statement.

Wesfarmers' initial bid was subject to a range of conditions, including that Lynas has relevant operating licences in Malaysia for a "satisfactory period" following the close of the deal.

Lynas, which has an \$800 million processing facility in Malaysia, is in a dispute with the Southeast Asian nation, which has told it to remove years of accumulated waste at its Malaysian processing plant in order to have its licence renewed.

On Monday, Lynas Corp said it is considering initial ore processing near its Australian mine.



The statement came after Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said last week that companies interested in acquiring Lynas had pledged to decontaminate low-level radioactivity from mined ore before shipping it to the country.

Wesfarmers said on Tuesday that it saw Lynas's announcements on Monday as positive progress towards satisfactory licence certainty.

"Wesfarmers expects that detailed licence conditions will be communicated in due course by the Malaysian Government. This will allow a detailed assessment of the costs and timeline to address the licence conditions," it said.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/wesfarmers-reiterates-lynas-offer-says-could-ease-conditions>



> Local

Heavy metal in Straits of Malacca shellfish

08 APR 2019 / 22:04 H.

Picture for representation only. — AFP

KUALA LUMPUR: Seafood lovers living on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia are being warned to reduce their shellfish consumption because of the risk of heavy metal poisoning.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) School of Marine & Environmental Sciences marine biology programme senior lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Ong Meng Chuan, said a team of 25 scientists and researcher detected a high concentration of heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium, plumbum and mercury around estuaries and harbours in the Straits of Malacca during a scientific voyage from March 13-22.

He said findings reveal the waters of Johor, Port Klang and Penang are at a higher risk of heavy metal contamination.

“This situation indirectly leads to the contamination of a food source because it is in the nature of shellfish to stay put and not migrate in search of food.

“Obviously, if the water is contaminated with heavy metals, it will be passed up the food chain,” he told Bernama.

The marine expedition using UMT’s research vessel, RV Discovery, was carried out in conjunction with the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace 2019 (LIMA’19) exhibition and sailed from Kuala Terengganu to Tanjung Lembung, Langkawi.

The team collected samples from more than 45 stations along two shipping routes: the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea.

Ong said many don’t realise the long-term health consequences of eating contaminated food from the sea.

“Heavy metal bioaccumulation takes a long time to be detected. The build-up from eating arsenic- or mercury-contaminated food can lead to various disorders,” he said.

He said the Straits of Malacca is more polluted compared to the South China Sea because it is shallow and narrow, and experiencing growth in industrial activities in the port and estuary area.

He said river currents in estuarine waters were weaker, allowing heavy metals to easily sink and accumulate on the floor of the estuary.

Ong said the government and relevant powers should ensure strict enforcement of the law to tackle heavy metal pollution in earnest.

“Perhaps a heavier penalty or tougher sentence is needed ... because we don’t want another Sg Kim Kim incident which affected the health of over 2,000 people,” he said. — *Bernama*

https://www.thesundaily.my/local/heavy-metal-in-straits-of-malacca-shellfish-YX770023#pk_campaign=MASwpn&pk_kwd=Heavy+metal+in+Straits+of+Malacca+shellfish



> Local

Another 50 Kuala Terla farmers facing eviction

09 APR 2019 / 12:49 H.



Pix for representational purpose only.

CAMERON HIGHLANDS: Nearly three generations of their families have operated the fruit and vegetable farms in Kuala Terla in the mukim of Ulu Telom here, for over half a century but another 50 smallholders there are likely to be evicted by the Pahang state authorities this week.

Between Feb 25 and mid-March, the Cameron Highlands district and land offices tore down the structures at 11 farms located in the same area under the first phase of its enforcement against the Kuala Terla smallholders who, according to the state government, not only violated certain conditions stipulated in their temporary occupation licence (TOL) but also used prohibited chemical substances that allegedly contaminated the nearby river.

The authorities are expected to carry out the second phase of its enforcement action sometime this week, this time against 50 farms spread over an area of 80 hectares in Kuala Terla.

The affected smallholders, who have been issued a 30-day notice to vacate their farms, are hoping that Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail would meet their request for a dialogue to discuss the issue before taking action against them.

Pollution allegations untrue

Justifying the state authorities' enforcement action, Wan Rosdy had said that the farmers concerned were operating their farms in the Terla water catchment area and that their activities have caused one of the rivers there, Sungai Ichat, to become polluted.

He said the Kuala Terla Water Treatment Plant, which has been operating since 2007, used to draw its raw water supply from Sungai Ichat and Sungai Terla.

“Both these rivers are supposed to be its sources of raw water supply but now only the water from Sungai Terla can be used as Sungai Ichat is severely polluted, made worse by the illegal framing on both sides of its bank,” he said, adding that Sungai Terla’s raw water supply was also diminishing.



T. Ramachandran, 45, who operates a 2.4ha vegetable and chrysanthemum flower farm in Kuala Terla, refuted the mentri besar's allegations that their farm activities were polluting Sungai Ichat.

He claimed that Sungai Terla was, in fact, more polluted as a result of large-scale illegal farming carried out by some companies located in the upstream area of the river.

Sungai Terla – which is a source of water supply for about 70% of Cameron Highlands residents – and the much smaller Sungai Ichat flow separately before merging to form Sungai Telum, he pointed out.

“Therefore, we urge the mentri besar and the relevant authorities to come down (to Cameron Highlands) to get a clearer picture. This matter has to be resolved fast because we’ve been told to vacate our farms by this week... we are going to lose our source of income,” he told *Bernama*.

Heavy losses

Ramachandran said he would incur losses of more than RM1 million if he is evicted from his farm.

“How am I going to repay my bank loan?” he asked.

He has sent a memorandum to the Pahang Land and Mines Office and Pahang State Secretary's office, outlining his proposal for the creation of a small catchment area in the upper reaches of Sungai Ichat and installation of a one-kilometre-long pipe to channel water from the river to the Kuala Terla Water Treatment Plant to overcome the water shortage issue.

Another farmer S. Saravanan, 39, is distressed that the state government is accusing the 61 smallholders operating along Sungai Ichat of polluting the river when the real culprits were the farms operated by large companies in the upstream region of Sungai Terla.

He claimed that some irresponsible people have also installed pipes to channel water from Sungai Terla to their farms which, he pointed out, has contributed to the shortage in water supply in Cameron Highlands.

S. Mathan, 36, who operates a two-ha vegetable farm, said it was unfair to treat them as illegal farmers and accuse them of contaminating the river.

On the TOL, he said each time he visited the district and land offices to update his licence or to pay the necessary fees, he would be given a letter stating that his TOL was still active.

“No information was given to us about our eviction,” he said, adding that they also had good reasons to put up plastic canopies for some of their vegetables and fruit trees and build quarters for their workers to stay.

“Strawberries, grapes, tomatoes and capsicum thrive when planted inside plastic canopies. And, we had to build the workers quarters as it was one of the conditions we had to meet when applying for foreign workers at the Manpower Department.”

Wan Rosdy had said that the state government had stopped issuing TOL since 2017 as the farm operators had violated its terms by building permanent structures on their smallholdings.

Farms destroyed

The smallholders whose farms were torn down during the first phase of the enforcement action over the last two months never expected their years of hard work to come to nought.

“Everything was destroyed. The only things left behind was the canopy and the net to keep insects away... we didn't even have the chance to harvest (our fruits and vegetables),” lamented one of the affected farmers.



Tan Kian Teck, 35, a third-generation smallholder, said he had spent RM300,000 to build a canopy to protect his cherry tomatoes, planted on a 0.8-ha plot operated by his family since 1968.

“The notice to vacate our land within seven days was not fair to us. We hope the authorities will carry out a thorough investigation, instead of putting the blame on us alone,” he said.

Lee Ying Loon, 46, another victim of the recent enforcement action, said before he took over the 50-year-old farm, his grandfather and father had been operating it.

He is now almost at his wits’ end trying to figure out how he is going to repay the bank loan he had taken.

Handle issue carefully

Cameron Highlands resident K. Ageelan, 28, meanwhile, said the state government has to handle the farm issue carefully as Sungai Terla was also polluted.

He felt that not all farmers disposed of their agricultural waste or chemicals into the rivers there.

“In some cases, three generations of the same family have been operating the farms. Just because there’s some pollution in a river doesn’t mean that all the smallholders are guilty.

“The enforcement action against them has resulted in them losing their livelihoods. The authorities should investigate the actual causes of the river’s pollution from all angles as illegal land exploitation is taking place behind the hills and this has yet to be addressed by the state government,” he said.

Lee Jia Ci, 37, from Brinchang, also felt that only a handful of farmers were responsible for Sungai Terla’s pollution problem.

Bernama, meanwhile, has sought further clarification on this issue from the Pahang government but has yet to get any response. — *Bernama*

<https://www.thesundaily.my/local/another-50-kuala-terla-farmers-facing-eviction-AY771406>



BERITA | DUNIA

Hampir 9,000 orang jatuh sakit akibat jerebu di utara Thailand

Agensi / April 08, 2019 21:39 MYT



Bacaan pencemaran udara di Chiang Mai kini sudah 10 kali ganda melebihi tahap selamat standrad Thailand. - Reuters

CHIANG MAI: Lebih daripada 8,600 penduduk di wilayah utara Thailand kini mendapatkan rawatan akibat penyakit yang berkaitan dengan masalah jerebu.

Portal berita *Bangkok Post* melaporkan, kebanyakan daripada mereka kini mengalami

gangguan pernafasan sejak Januari, berdasarkan maklumat daripada Pejabat Keselamatan Kesihatan Kebangsaan (NHSO).

Sejak Februari, kualiti udara menjunam dengan bacaan partikel pencemaran di wilayah-wilayah utara makin meningkat melepasi paras selamat.

Daerah Mae Teng di Chiang Mai misalnya, mencatatkan paras pencemaran yang membimbangkan iaitu 492.57 mikrogram per meter kubik ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) udara, iaitu 10 kali ganda melebihi bacaan tahap selamat standrad Thailand, dan 20 kali ganda melebihi paras selamat Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

Di Chiang Rai pula, bacaannya sudah melebihi 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ sejak 13 Mac lalu. Wilayah lain yang juga dalam keadaan berjaga-jaga adalah di Lampang, Lamphun, Mae Hong Son, Nan, Phrae, Phayao dan Tak.

Pembakaran ladang pada musim panas menjadi punca masalah jerebu, selain disumbangkan pelepasan asap dari sektor industri serta kenderaan yang semakin bertambah di jalanan.

Timbalan Setiausaha Agung NHSO, Dr Atthaporn Limpanyalert berkata, bilangan pesakit respiratori akibat masalah jerebu di Chiang Mai dan wilayah-wilayah lain di utara negara itu meningkat secara mendadak sejak beberapa bulan lalu.

“Kumpulan yang palung berisiko ialah mereka yang mempunyai penyakit jantung, paru-paru dan pernafasan serta alergi. Jerebu ini boleh memburukkan lagi keadaan mereka,” ujarinya.

Penduduk di semua wilayah terjejas diingatkan supaya memakai topeng muka N95 jika berada di luar rumah, selain dinasihatkan supaya lebih kerap berada di dalam bangunan.

<http://www.astroawani.com/berita-dunia/hampir-9-000-orang-jatuh-sakit-akibat-jerebu-di-utara-thailand-203788>



Seafood lovers should eat less shellfish due to heavy metal poisoning risk

- **NATION**
- **Monday, 8 Apr 2019** 10:48 PM MYT



KUALA LUMPUR (Bernama): Seafood lovers living on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia are being warned to reduce their shellfish consumption because of the risk of heavy metal poisoning.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) School of Marine and Environmental Sciences marine biology programme senior lecturer, Assoc Prof Dr Ong Meng Chuan, said a team of 25

scientists and researchers detected a high concentration of heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium, plumbum and mercury around estuaries and harbours in the Straits of Malacca during a scientific voyage from March 13-22.

He said findings reveal the waters of Johor, Port Klang and Pulau Pinang are at a higher risk of heavy metal contamination.

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The team collected samples from more than 45 stations along two shipping routes: the Straits of Malacca and South China Sea.

Dr Ong said many don't realise the long-term health consequences of eating contaminated food from the sea.

"Heavy metal bioaccumulation takes a long time to be detected. The build-up from eating arsenic- or mercury-contaminated food can lead to various disorders," he said.

He said the Straits of Malacca is more polluted compared with the South China Sea because it is shallow and narrow, and experiencing growth in industrial activities in the port and estuary areas.

He said river currents in estuarine waters were weaker, allowing heavy metals to easily sink and accumulate on the floor of the estuary.



Dr Ong said the government and relevant powers should ensure strict enforcement of the law to tackle heavy metal pollution.

"Perhaps a heavier penalty or tougher sentence is needed because we don't want another Sg Kim Kim incident which affected the health of over 2,000 people," he added. - **Bernama**

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/08/seafood-lovers-should-eat-less-shellfish-due-to-heavy-metal-poisoning-risk/#2PLXX1AaP6qrZ4cA.99>




CMS to close deals on supply of scheduled wastes

- **CORPORATE NEWS**
- Tuesday, 9 Apr 2019
- by **jack wong**



These scheduled wastes, such as mineral sludges and sludges that contain one or several metals or fluoride, provide CMS with alternative sources of materials that serve as substitutes for the typical raw materials or fuels currently used in the group's clinker, cement and concrete production activities.

KUCHING: **Cahya Mata Sarawak Bhd**  (CMS) will close deals with several industries

for the supply of scheduled wastes this year.

These scheduled wastes, such as mineral sludges and sludges that contain one or several metals or fluoride, provide CMS with alternative sources of materials that serve as substitutes for the typical raw materials or fuels currently used in the group's clinker, cement and concrete production activities.

Last year, the group incorporated some 256 tonnes of calcium hydroxide sludge in the raw mix pile for the production of clinker, the key raw material for cement manufacturing.

"In 2019, we will close several deals with waste generators for scheduled waste codes SW427, SW207, SW204 and SW104 from several industrials in Sarawak.

"The additional quantity per month will be around 200 to 300 tonnes," according to CMS in its annual Sustainability Report 2018 released last week. (SW427 is defined as mineral sludges including calcium hydroxide sludges, phosphating sludges, calcium sulphite sludges and carbonates sludges.)

CMS, which is Sarawak's sole cement manufacturer, said the group is continuing to look for additional sources of sludges from industries like those operating in Samalaju Industrial Park (SIP)



(for energy intensive industries), Bintulu and Samajaya Free Industrial Zone (for high-tech industries) here.

“Following extensive research into using phosphogypsum as a replacement for limestone, our clinker plant has come to the conclusion that the waste material is viable as a material replacement.

“We have plans to purchase the waste material from an identified source.

“The plant has also considered replacing its light fuel oil with residual fuel oil. We are currently in discussions with Petronas and have sourced several recycled oil suppliers in the Kuching area.

“The plant is also looking to substitute its use of limestone by up to 3% by replacing this with sludge, old kiln bricks and ash,” added the Sarawak conglomerate.

In Samalaju Industrial Park, CMS is in talks with OM (Materials) Sarawak Sdn Bhd and Pertama Ferroalloys Sdn Bhd (both own ferrosilicon and manganese smelting plants) and OCI Malaysia Sdn Bhd for the supply of scheduled wastes.

“During the year, R&D (research and development) activities were conducted on waste generated within SIP in the laboratory and then on an industrial scale.

“Subsequently, the applications were submitted to and approved by the DOE (Department of Environment) in Putrajaya.”

CMS said it is currently negotiating with DOE on scheduled wastes’ transportation licences, especially on the sea route .

The company expects alternative raw materials’ usage to increase significantly once approval is granted by DOE to use scheduled wastes from waste generators at SIP and Samajaya Free Industrial Zone.

CMS recently launched a new eco-friendly cement product - portland limestone cement (PLC) - which is manufactured by grinding a special blend of clinker, gypsum and high quality limestone .

“As limestone material is readily available and cheaper in price, the production of PLC with more than 20% limestone addition is reducing overall operational costs, thereby increasing profit margins.

“Unlike our flagship product - portland cement 42.5N - which is an all purpose product that can be used for all types of structures, PLC with a strength class of 32.5N is targeted for low-rise concrete structures, such as single storey residential, office and commercial buildings.

“Its high workability and plasticity makes PLC ideal for plastering and bricklaying and it is less susceptible to cracks during the drying process.”

“It can also be used for construction of drains and rural or village roads,” said CMS.

Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2019/04/09/cms-to-close-deals-on-supply-of-scheduled-wastes/#1Oqo78bC6qRQAu7g.99>



Illegal dumpsites found in Permas Jaya and Ulu Tiram

- METRO NEWS
- Monday, 8 Apr 2019



This dumpsite was discovered at a village in Ban Foo in Ulu Tiram.

JOHOR BARU: Johor Baru City Council (MBJB) has received public complaints on illegal dumpsites, with one believed to contain chemical waste.

Mayor Datuk Amran A. Rahman said the local authority received complaints with regards to

a barrel being dumped near a school in Permas Jaya.

"The barrel was believed to contain chemical waste and we have alerted the Department of Environment (DOE) for the necessary action.

"Following the report, DOE has taken samples from the barrel and is currently identifying its content," he said during the MBJB full board meeting.

"We are investigating the matter to identify the landowner and will take action against the owner."

"Council personnel also visited the area with Tebrau MP Steven Choong in the middle of March," he added.

Amran reminded councillors to be wary of such activities as it could cause misery to the public, citing the Sungai Kim Kim incident as an example.

On another matter, Amran said the council recently conducted an operation with other agencies including the DOE, Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Corporation (SWCorp) and the health department to stop open burning under its jurisdiction.

"The operation was conducted at Maju Jaya Industrial Area and the council issued a compound to a factory owner while other agencies also issued notices.

"I hope all departments under MBJB, as well as agencies will continue to educate the public on ways to protect the environment," he said.

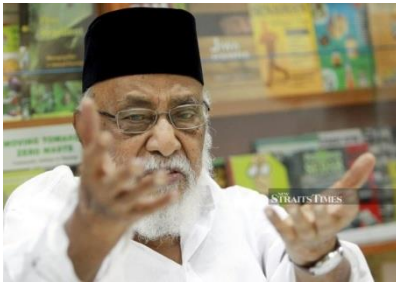
Read more at <https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2019/04/08/illegal-dumpsites-found-in-permas-jaya-and-ulu-tiram/#HqbljTz0xOHhHGov.99>



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3 minute read

SAM urges stern action against Sungai Rui polluters



S.M. Mohamed Idris, also called for the setting up of a monitoring committee to ensure that no one was polluting the river. Pic by NSTP/DANIAL SAAD

By **Audrey Dermawan**

April 8, 2019 @ 4:41pm



GEORGE TOWN: Environmental group Sahabat Alam Malaysia has called for severe penalties to be imposed on polluters of Sungai Rui following the discovery of arsenic elements.

Its president, S.M. Mohamed Idris, also called for the setting up of a monitoring committee to ensure that no one was polluting the river.

"SAM is concerned with the recent arsenic pollution in Sungai Rui in Grik, Perak, as it is not only affecting the water quality and the marine eco system, but the lives of humans are in danger if the problem is not addressed immediately.

"Thus, we urge the Perak government, the Department of Environment (DOE), the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (JAS) and the local authority to conduct continuous monitoring to ensure that the mining operation which is believed to be the cause of the pollution no longer carries out unlawful activities.

"We hope that this issue is given serious attention by the state government, as if left unattended, more repercussion will affect the environment and the lives of residents who live near the river," he said today.

It was recently reported that hundreds of villagers in Grik were living in fear following the discovery of arsenic elements in Sungai Rui.

They had claimed that they had known the 60km long river was heavily polluted for many years, but were not aware that arsenic, which poses significant health risks to humans, were among the contaminants.

They have since pointed their fingers at nearby mining operations.

Idris said SAM regretted that though Sungai Rui had been polluted for more than 30 years, no adequate action had been taken by the parties involved to deal with the problem.

"We believe that if the condition persists, there will be threats and adverse effects resembling the disasters that hit Sungai Kim Kim in Johor," he added.

He said residents had developed skin diseases, shrimp and fish were threatened and agricultural activities were also affected.

Idris said the latest investigation and test reports on water samples from Sungai Rui should be made public to calm residents' fears.

"SAM will continue to follow up on this issue with the cooperation of the residents," he said.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/477345/sam-urges-stern-action-against-sungai-rui-polluters>



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5 minute read

Lynas mulls processing in Australia as Malaysia ups pressure



Lynas, the world's only major producer of rare earths outside China, has been locked in a dispute with the Southeast Asian nation, which has told it to remove years

Lynas staff makes rare earth processing at the Lynas Process Plant, Gebeng Industrial Estate. NSTP/ MUHD ASYRAF SAWAL. NSTP/ MUHD ASYRAF SAWAL



By **Reuters** - April 8, 2019 @ 11:23am

AUSTRALIAN rare-earths miner Lynas Corp said on Monday that it is considering initial ore processing close to its Australian mine, as Malaysia stepped up pressure on the company in the midst of a takeover struggle.

Lynas, the world's only major producer of rare earths outside China, has been locked in a dispute with the Southeast Asian nation, which has told it to remove years of accumulated waste as a condition of renewing its licence in September.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Friday that companies interested in acquiring Lynas had pledged to remove low-level radioactivity before shipping raw materials to the country.

Mahathir did not specify which companies were interested in Lynas. The company last month rejected a US\$1.1 billion takeover approach by Australian retail-to-chemicals conglomerate Wesfarmers.

Lynas said on Monday that for some months it has been developing detailed plans that would assist the company to mitigate risk from any regulatory changes in Malaysia.

"We see value in operating alternative cracking and leaching processing close to our resource," it said in a statement,

Lynas mines rare earths at Mount Weld in Western Australia and currently ships the concentrated material to an US\$800 million processing plant in Kuantan, Malaysia, where it stores thousands of tonnes of waste.



Initial ore processing in Australia to lower levels of radioactivity would mean building a cracking and leaching plant at a cost of about A\$100 million over three years, according to a research report by brokerage CLSA.

Mahathir said even Lynas could operate in the country as long as raw materials coming to Malaysia were cleaned.

"A partial resolution to the political uncertainty has been reached which will bring forward plans to build a cracking plant in Australia," CLSA said.

Wesfarmers said that it welcomed comments by the Malaysian government.

"It is consistent with prior public statements by the government and the views shared with us in meetings with senior Malaysian government officials since we announced our proposal to acquire Lynas," it said in a statement.

"We look forward to more detail from the government about Lynas' operating licence certainty, to assess the conditionality of our proposal."

Lynas said its Japanese lenders and customers had pledged their support for the company and its management. It was seeking further clarification from the Malaysian government.

In December, Malaysia's Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) told Lynas 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 that exporting the residue within the mandated timeline was "unachievable."-Reuters

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/477222/lynas-mulls-processing-australia-malaysia-ups-pressure>



Scientists warn about eating shellfish from heavy metal contaminated Straits of Malacca



Seafood lovers living on the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia are being warned to reduce their shellfish consumption because of the risk of heavy metal poisoning. (File pic: For illustration purposes only)

By **Bernama** - April 8, 2019 @ 8:26pm

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mercury around estuaries and harbours in the Straits of Malacca during a scientific voyage from March 13-22.

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"Perhaps a heavier penalty or tougher sentence is needed ... because we don't want another Sg Kim Kim incident which affected the health of over 2,000 people," he said. — **BERNAMA**

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/04/477435/scientists-warn-about-eating-shellfish-heavy-metal-contaminated-straits>



Observations

The Secret Sauce for Environmental Problem Solving

Its collaboration—but that only works when it's voluntary, not imposed

• By [David Wilkie](#) on **April 8, 2019**



Credit: Getty Images

“Enough! Cut it with the prima donna nonsense. There is no ‘I’ in TEAM!”

I can still see Mr. Stephensen railing at me and my rugby squad as we stood shivering in the rain and covered in mud, after being beaten by a school we should have trounced. “It’s teamwork, collaboration that makes us mighty, better than the sum of our parts. We can always do better when we do it together.”

That is true in rugby, but is it true in science? My earliest heroes were Gregor Mendel, Charles Darwin, Marie Curie, E.O. Wilson, Rachel Carson and Margaret Mead. All seemed to be loners, solitary strivers, mulling and solving life’s hardest problems, and doing so largely by themselves.

What would they think of the growing calls for more collaborative science? Would they see value in more donor-funded efforts to bring people together from different disciplines and with different expertise in attempts to solve the big questions of today and tomorrow? I agree with my rugby coach that collaboration is a good thing. But only when it is founded on a critical ingredient: a coalition of the willing.



Collaboration can be stunningly successful when the parts seek out one another and self-assemble to solve a shared problem. Even when a group forms from dissimilar organizations with, at times, contrary agendas and ways of working, the willingness of group members to collaborate often helps to bridge these differences.

Unfortunately, collaborations are often born of, or attempted through, the opposite of willingness: force. Too often I have been subject to partnerships orchestrated to encourage collaboration, but luring the individual parts together, largely against their wishes, can fail spectacularly to achieve the hoped-for results.

There are models, however, that show how funding that enables collaborations of eager collaborators can produce remarkable outcomes. One such example is the working-group model pioneered by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) and which undergirds the Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP), itself a collaborative initiative between NCEAS, Wildlife Conservation Society and The Nature Conservancy.

In the late 1990s an NCEAS working group self-assembled to develop a theory of marine reserves that used the best available science and combined the interests and concerns of fishers and the fishing industry with those of the conservation community. This groundbreaking collaboration not only resulted in the publication of 33 journal articles and one book, but also laid the foundation for a significant expansion of the state of California's marine protected area network in 2007.

More recently, and through SNAPP, a novel mixture of experts from universities, conservation NGOs, insurance companies and the Army Corps of Engineers came together to better understand the role that natural coastal defenses, such as wetlands and mangrove forests, play in protecting people and property from storms, sea-level rise, and other natural hazards.

Through their teamwork, they calculated first-ever dollar values of these coastal habitats in terms of the losses they can prevent, and they are now influencing the way global insurance giants like Lloyd's of London are doing business.

Importantly, initiatives like SNAPP provide the repeated interaction that collaborations of the willing need to coax each individual out of their comfort zone to listen and learn from each other. It is highly unlikely that the results these two collaborations generated could have been achieved by a solitary genius toiling alone in a garret.

Supporting spaces where women and men with different skill sets and experiences can decide on their own to convene and synthesize their knowledge and perspectives in a fail-safe way is both fun and illuminating. I have been lucky enough to participate in several SNAPP working groups, and it is often surprising what these teams can conjure up to solve knotty problems.



Maybe the greatest barrier to collaborations of the willing is not a lack of donor interest and support. Rather, it is siloed individuals who, through no fault of their own, are unaware of people outside of their narrow discipline with whom it would be fun and fruitful to collaborate on solving that tricky problem over which they have been struggling.

I am one of these siloed individuals. One of the greatest threats to wildlife in Africa derives from so many people lacking alternatives for food outside of hunting and eating wild animals. Solving this, my own tricky problem, requires that I work with experts in livestock, family nutrition and demand elasticity. But as an ecologist working to conserve nature, I don't naturally have phone numbers in my contacts for professionals in poultry production or child health.

Though it was easy for me to identify the right organizations to connect with, it was no small task to find the best person within each organization—another key ingredient to forming coalitions of the willing.

Thankfully, there are people like Heather Tallis at the Nature Conservancy who understand how to bring willing people together. Through the Bridge Collaborative, she helped me connect with the right experts at one of their daylong collaboration “cocktail parties,” where hopeful problem-solvers in conservation, food production and family health can mingle and find kindred professionals.

An open mind and the right connections may sound so simple and perhaps a bit trite, but they are arguably undervalued ingredients in effective collaborations. Through efforts like the Bridge Collaborative and SNAPP, willing collaborators have critical venues to find one another and cook that magic sauce we need for environmental problem solving.

The views expressed are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily those of Scientific American.

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<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/the-secret-sauce-for-environmental-problem-solving/>



MALAYSIA

CORPORATE

TOP STORIES

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Highlight

Wesfarmers has talks with Malaysian government on Lynas

April 09, 2019 10:09 am +08



THEEDGETM Collection
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SYDNEY (April 9): Wesfarmers engaged in talks with the Malaysian government to better understand the licensing and regulatory regime affecting Lynas operations in Malaysia, and to present its credentials as a potential acquirer of Lynas.

* Company is disappointed at the mischaracterization of talks with government officials and rejects any inference that these were inappropriate or intended to interfere with government process

* In all its talks, Wesfarmers advised that it doesn't speak for Lynas, that its takeover proposal remains subject to a number of conditions and there is no certainty its proposal would result in a transaction

* "We see the Prime Minister's statements as a positive step towards the resolution of longstanding regulatory and operating uncertainty for Lynas," Wesfarmers Managing Director Rob Scott says

* With greater clarity around licence renewal and Lynas plans to address these licence conditions, Wesfarmers remains open to engage with the Lynas board on its proposal.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/wesfarmers-has-talks-malaysian-government-lynas>



MALAYSIA CORPORATE

Lynas sees value in alternative cracking & leaching processing

Bloomberg/Bloomberg
April 09, 2019 10:16 am +08



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SYDNEY (April 9): Lynas announces it sees value in operating alternative cracking and leaching processing close to resource, and primary locations considered for growth are in Western Australia, the co. says in a filing.

* Co. says preference has been to add to Malaysian capacity, not replace it

** Notes that Malaysian cracking and leaching operation are performing very well as result of IP team has developed and owned

** Co. says it remains committed to Malaysian economy and protecting jobs; well placed to deal with any change in Malaysian government policy

* Co. says at this time no decisions have been made, but events of past few weeks means co. is accelerating this work

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/lynas-sees-value-alternative-cracking-leaching-processing>



Highlight

Lynas CEO says identified potential new sites for some processing

Bloomberg/Bloomberg

April 08, 2019 12:22 pm +08



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MELBOURNE (April 8): Co. has considered five possible locations to carry out some processing under prospective expansion plans, CEO Amanda Lacaze says Monday on a webcast with investors.

* Lynas is considering various options, though remains confident of reaching agreements with Malaysia's governments over continued operation of its processing facility in Kuantan

* NOTE: The rare earths producer can continue operations in Malaysia if co. agrees to ensure raw material is decontaminated before being sent to the country, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said last week

* NOTE: Lynas ships raw materials from a mine in Australia to a plant in Malaysia and has come under scrutiny over its handling of some waste created during processing, including low-level radioactive material

* Co. isn't aware of interest from other parties in Lynas as referenced by Mahathir in the comments, Lacaze says

* NOTE: Lynas last month rejected a A\$1.5 billion takeover approach from Wesfarmers Ltd.

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/lynas-ceo-says-identified-potential-new-sites-some-processing>



MALAYSIA **CORPORATE**

Update

Lynas mulls processing in Australia as Malaysia ups pressure

Reuters/Reuters

April 08, 2019 10:15 am +08

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MELBOURNE (April 8): Australian rare-earths miner Lynas Corp said on Monday that it was considering initial ore processing close to its Australian mine, as Malaysia stepped up pressure on the company in the midst of a takeover struggle.

Lynas, the world's only major producer of rare earths outside China, has been locked in a dispute with the South East Asian nation, which has told it to remove years of accumulated waste as a condition of renewing its licence in September.

Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Friday that companies interested in acquiring Lynas had pledged to remove low-level radioactivity before shipping raw materials to the country.

Dr Mahathir did not specify which companies were interested in Lynas. The company last month rejected a US\$1.1 billion takeover approach by Australian retail-to-chemicals conglomerate Wesfarmers.

Lynas said on Monday that for some months it has been developing detailed plans that would assist the company to mitigate risk from any regulatory changes in Malaysia.

"We see value in operating alternative cracking and leaching processing close to our resource," it said in a statement.

Lynas mines rare earths at Mount Weld in Western Australia and currently ships the concentrated material to an US\$800 million processing plant in Kuantan, Malaysia, where it stores thousands of tonnes of waste.

Initial ore processing in Australia to lower levels of radioactivity would mean building a cracking and leaching plant at a cost of about A\$100 million over three years, according to a research report by brokerage CLSA.

Dr Mahathir said even Lynas could operate in the country as long as raw materials coming to Malaysia were cleaned.



"A partial resolution to the political uncertainty has been reached which will bring forward plans to build a cracking plant in Australia," CLSA said.

Wesfarmers said that it welcomed comments by the Malaysian government.

"It is consistent with prior public statements by the government and the views shared with us in meetings with senior Malaysian government officials since we announced our proposal to acquire Lynas," it said in a statement.

"We look forward to more detail from the government about Lynas' operating licence certainty, to assess the conditionality of our proposal."

Lynas said its Japanese lenders and customers had pledged their support for the company and its management. It was seeking further clarification from the Malaysian government.

In December, Malaysia's Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) told Lynas 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 that exporting the residue within the mandated timeline was "unachievable".

<https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/lynas-mulls-initial-ore-processing-australia-malaysia-regulations-intensify>



Aussie conglomerate reiterates Lynas offer, says could ease conditions

Reuters

April 9, 2019 8:41 AM



Lynas has been locked in a dispute with Putrajaya over the disposal of waste at its processing plant in Kuantan. (Bernama pic)

outside China.

PERTH: Australia's Wesfarmers Ltd said today it is still interested in acquiring Lynas Corp Ltd and could table a less conditional bid for the only major producer of rare earth elements

An initial offer of A\$1.5 billion (US\$1.1 billion) by the retail-to-chemicals conglomerate was previously rebuffed by Lynas' board, which termed the deal "highly conditional".

"Wesfarmers remains open to engage with the Lynas board on our proposal, with a view to progressing a less conditional proposal," managing director Rob Scott said in a statement.

Wesfarmers' initial bid was subject to a range of conditions, including that Lynas has relevant operating licences in Malaysia for a "satisfactory period" following the close of the deal.

Lynas, which has a US\$800 million processing facility in Malaysia, is in a dispute with Putrajaya, which has told it to remove years of accumulated waste at its processing plant in Kuantan in order to have its licence renewed.

Yesterday, Lynas Corp said it is considering initial ore processing near its Australian mine.

The statement came after Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last week that companies interested in acquiring Lynas had pledged to decontaminate low-level radioactivity from mined ore before shipping it to the country.

Wesfarmers said today that it saw Lynas's announcements as positive progress towards satisfactory licence certainty.

"Wesfarmers expects that detailed licence conditions will be communicated in due course by the Malaysian government. This will allow a detailed assessment of the costs and timeline to address the licence conditions," it said.

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2019/04/09/aussie-conglomerate-reiterates-lynas-offer-says-could-ease-conditions/>



Lynas mulls ore processing in Australia as regulations intensify

Reuters

April 8, 2019 7:36 AM



Lynas is the only proven producer of rare earths outside China. (Bernama pic)

KUALA LUMPUR: Australian rare-earths miner Lynas Corp said today that it was considering initial ore processing close to its Australian mine, as the government stepped up pressure on the company in the midst of a takeover struggle.

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<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2019/04/08/lynas-mulls-initial-ore-processing-in-australia-as-regulations-intensify/>



1. HOME
2. **MALAYSIA**

Singapore PM raises concern over Johor water supply pollution, sustainability

Published 8 hours ago on 09 April 2019

By Zurairi AR



Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong speaks during a joint news conference with Malaysia's Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Putrajaya April 9, 2019. — Picture by Mukhriz Hazim

PUTRAJAYA, April 9 — Lee Hsien Loong expressed today Singapore's concern over pollution and sustainability of the water supply from Johor, pointing at the recent toxic waste incident in Sg Kim Kim that saw students hospitalised

and schools closed.

Amid a protracted tussle over the water deal between the republic and Malaysia, the Singapore prime minister suggested reviewing the water supply to meet both countries' requirements.

"If the Johor River suffers an incident like that which happened in Sungai Kim Kim recently, it will be disastrous for both countries. That is one concern we have," he told a joint press conference with Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad after their 9th bilateral Leaders' Retreat here.

Lee highlighted that the Singaporean Public Utilities Board's (PUB) water processing plant in Kota Tinggi, Johor, had to be closed last week due to high ammonia levels.

An oil-palm mill in Sedenak, Johor, had polluted Sungai Sayong that flows into Sungai Johor (Johor River).

Lee also expressed worry about sustainability when pointing to Johor's water plants at Loji Air and Semangar that were upstream of PUB's own waterworks.

"These plants combined, plus the Kota Tinggi waterworks belonging to PUB, draw from the Johor River quite possibly more water than the river can sustain," Lee said.



“It is in both countries’ interests to work together to ensure sustainable water supply for both sides because this will reduce the potential for conflict between the two countries.”

Both leaders today continued to disagree on the right to review the price of water under the 1962 Water Agreement that will expire in 2061, with Lee calling the document “sacrosanct”.

Under the agreement, Singapore may buy 250 million gallons of water per day from Sungai Johor at 3 sen per 1,000 gallons.

In return, Johor may buy back treated water from Singapore, of up to 2 per cent of the volume of raw water supplied, at 50 sen per 1,000 gallons.

Dr Mahathir said today the two leaders were committed to finding an amicable solution, even to the extent of bringing the dispute to international arbitration.

Bilateral relations between the federation and the island republic cooled after Dr Mahathir said last year that the price of raw water being sold to Singapore was “manifestly ridiculous.”

Putrajaya said Malaysia has given subsidies of up to RM2.4 billion — about RM42 million a year or RM100,000 a day — in the sale of raw water to Singapore since the agreement took effect.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/04/09/singapore-pm-raises-concern-over-johor-water-supply-pollution-sustainability/1741299>