Weekly News Bulletin
22nd March – 28th March 2026

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[Freight surge reshapes Guinea-China bauxite trade: Is the momentum under pressure?]

The Guinea-China bauxite corridor has long powered global aluminium supply chains. However, this high-volume trade now appears to be entering a more fragile phase, as rising freight costs, shifting trade flows, and emerging policy signals from Guinea begin to test the resilience of one of the world's most critical bulk routes, according to shipbroker Intermodal.

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[EU reviews alumina trade rules amid supply chain questions]

The European Union (EU) has been discussing some changes around how its rules apply to aluminium and alumina trade, especially when it comes to how materials actually move across supply chains. At the moment, restrictions are in place for certain aluminium imports, but alumina, which is used to produce aluminium, is still being traded. This difference has started to raise questions about whether the current setup fully reflects how the industry operates in practice.

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[China's aluminium processing sector sees modest growth amid peak season demand]

This week, the weekly operating rate of leading downstream aluminium processing enterprises in China edged up 1 percentage point w-o-w to 62.9per cent, with signs of the peak season slightly emerging and demand gradually being released. Specifically, the operating rates of leading enterprises in aluminium plate/sheet and strip and aluminium wire and cable were flat w-o-w this week. Auto orders recovered y-o-y less than expected, and exports to the Middle East were suspended, constraining any further rise in the operating rate.

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[Rise and fall in LME aluminium: cash climbs to $3,329/t, stocks slip nearly 1%]

Aluminium prices on the London Metal Exchange (LME) improved on March 20 compared to the previous close. Cash price reported gains by wide margins, futures contracts recovered from the previous session's decline, while opening stocks continued to slide.

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Macro geopolitical risks have yet to subside, and aluminium prices have maintained a fluctuating pattern

Futures: In the night session on March 20, the most-traded SHFE aluminium 2605 contract opened at RMB 24,100 per tonne, hit an intraday high of RMB 24,160 per tonne and a low of RMB 23,450 per tonne, and finally closed at RMB 23,530 per tonne, down RMB 490 per tonne from the previous close, a decline of 2.04 per cent. From a technical perspective, the 5-day (24,304) and 10-day moving averages (24,734) turned sharply downward, forming a bearish alignment, with prices remaining under pressure below short-term moving averages.

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LME aluminium price climbs to $3,294.5/t, despite backward curve pressure

After two days of declining price trend, on March 24, the London Metal Exchange (LME) aluminium price rose significantly. However, the longer-dated contracts were deduced from the previous season. The LME alumina platts price also rose from the last day. Both the LME cash bid and offer rose by USD 52 per tonne or 2 per cent, where the bid shifted from USD 3,242 per tonne to USD 3,294 per tonne. Similarly, the offer moved from USD 3,242.5 per tonne to USD 3,294.5 per tonne.

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Middle East tensions disrupt aluminium imports; South Korean SMEs facing supply risks; Bauxite Mining, Price, Ore, Mineral, Formula, Production.

The Middle East tension is affecting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Korea that depend on the region for aluminium and naptha. A report says these firms need support to manage raw material supply and exports. SMEs do not import much overall from the Middle East, but they depend on it for some key materials. According to a report by The Small and Medium Venture Business Research Institute, about 82.8 per cent of naphtha imports come from countries like Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar. Some aluminium products also rely on the region, including scrap (11.2 per cent) and non-alloy ingots (8.8 per cent). This creates a risk of supply problems.