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BY SAMANTHA HO

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian government has imposed provisional anti-dumping duties on cold-rolled stainless steel (CRSS) imports from China, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand after finding that there is sufficient evidence to continue their investigation.

The duties, which range from 7.27% to 111.61%, will be effective for not more than 120 days from today, the international trade and industry ministry (Miti) said in an announcement.

The measures follow a preliminary anti-dumping investigation, which found there is sufficient evidence to further investigate the importation of CRSS from the alleged countries, Miti said.

The investigation had been initiated based on a petition filed

by Bahru Stainless Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Spanish stainless steel maker Acerinox SA, on behalf of domestic CRSS producers.

A federal gazette issued yesterday indicated that the rates of duties vary by companies from different countries.

South Korean companies face the lowest duty of 7.27%, apart from Hyundai BNG Steel Co Ltd, Hyundai Steel Company and POSCO, which do not face any duties.

Meanwhile, companies apart from POSCO-Thainox in Thailand face the highest duty of 111.61%.

The latest duties are one of many protective measures in the domestic steel sector, in which upstream and downstream players have divided views on the government's initiative to protect the industry.

Malaysian industry players have previously protested safeguard duties on other steel prod-

ucts such as steel wire rod (SWR) and deformed bar-in-coil (DBIC) imports, as these have pushed up costs for downstream steel manufacturers and construction players.

The Malaysian Steel Association, which comprises Ann Joo Steel Bhd, Southern Steel Bhd and Malaysia Steel Works (KL) Bhd as well as Lion Industries Corp Bhd subsidiaries Amsteel Mills Sdn Bhd and Antara Steel Mills Sdn Bhd, had previously submitted the petition for safeguards against SWR and DBIC imports.

Other steel makers which have submitted petitions to Miti include Megasteel Sdn Bhd, which had called for a safeguard on imported hot-rolled coils in June this year.

Meanwhile, Mycron Steel Bhd had in December last year called for anti-dumping measures against cold-rolled coil imports.