

Chinese rare earths producer suspends output

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(AP)—China's biggest rare earths producer has suspended output in an effort to shore up slumping prices of the materials used by makers of mobile phones and other high-tech products.

Baotou Steel Rare-earth (Group) Hi-tech Co. said in a statement released through the Shanghai Stock Exchange that it suspended production Tuesday to promote "healthy development" of the rare earths market.

It gave no indication when production would resume and phone calls to Baogang were not answered.

The suspension comes amid efforts by China's government to tighten control over rare earths mining and exports to capture more of the profits that flow to Western makers of lightweight batteries and other products made of rare earths.

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