

**2,000 people 'whack a pinata' against Lynas  
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by Lee Long Hui**

Around 2,000 Kuantan citizens participated in an anti-Lynas gathering organised by the local anti-Lynas group 'Save Malaysia' committee at Taman Gelora in the Pahang capital this morning.

They were there despite the event, called '1311 for our family - whack a piñata' had been declared illegal and was monitored closely by the police.

Whacking the piñata was a symbolic action to say 'no' to the radioactive rare earth refinery being set up close to their hometown.

Tan Bun Teet, the chairperson of the committee, said that the police were stationed at Taman Gelora before sunrise, to jot down the identity card numbers of every single person who went to the public park, and they were told not to join the illegal assembly.

"We felt honoured and extremely flattered," he quipped when contacted by Malaysiakini after the event.

Yesterday, Pahang police chief Sharifuddin Abdul Ghani advised the public not to attend the gathering as the event had no police permit.

Tan admitted that the 'Save Malaysia' committee had never applied for a permit but insisted that Taman Gelora was a public place where people should not be prevented from having access. As such no permit was required, and he slammed the police for requiring one.

Besides, Tan added, the original spot for the committee to hold this gathering was occupied by a group from a nearby army camp and the Kuantan municipal council, to run programmes from last night until this morning.

He suspected that the purpose behind this was to hinder the anti-Lynas gathering and they were forced to find another spot within the park.

He said that that the actions of the authorities had annoyed and frustrated the people of Kuantan.

"They believe it is their right to protest, and don't deserve this kind of oppression, hence many people decided to show up today," he said.

The event started at 7.30 am today and finished two hours later.

A piñata, often made of paper mache, is a container that is decorated, filled with toys and or candy, and then broken as part of a ceremony or celebration. Piñatas are most commonly associated with Mexico.

26 piñatas were prepared for the gathering and all were in devil-like designs which referred to the Australian Lynas Corp which will operate the Lynas Advanced Material Plant (Lamp) at the Gebeng industrial zone near Kuantan.

Tan (right) said that 'Whack a piñata' event was to let the participants express their disgruntlement at the

RM1,500 million project.

The event came to an end after all the piñatas were broken and the participant shared the candies in the piñatas.

Apology demanded from Pahang MB

Meanwhile, the Stop Lynas Coalition (SLC) demanded that Pahang Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakon apologise to the residents of Bukit Merah, Perak, over his remarks.

In a press statement released yesterday, the coalition said that Adnan was interviewed by an Australian activist, Ryan Albrey, on Sept 7, and reportedly said that the material processed by the Mitsubishi Asia Rare Earth (ARE) Plant, was, despite the company's name, not rare earth.

The coalition rebutted Adnan's remark.

"ARE produces yttrium from monozite. Yttrium is a material that is used in making televisions. According to the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), rare earth is made up of up to 17 elements - 15 types of lanthanides, plus scandium and yttrium.

"Hence, what the ARE plant produces is rare earth. It profits by pawning the lives and safety of the locals. "SLC assumes that Adnan (far left in photo) doesn't understand the Bukit Merah incident well, which has resulted in a groundless statement which trifles the struggle of the residents, as well offending the feelings of the victims and their families," it said.

The coalition also expressed regret over Adnan's alleged racist statements in the interview and alleged he was trying to twist the facts.

During the interview, Adnan said that he was not excluding the fact that Malaysian Chinese who have links with China, were trying to bring the Lamp project to failure so that China could continue to monopolise the worldwide rare earth market.

"This is a serious accusation and SLC hopes that Adnan can provide evidence to back his allegations.

"Otherwise, As the MB of Pahang, Adnan showed himself not only not sensitive to the prosperity and harmony of society in Malaysia, but also tried to upset the public by unfounded racist assumptions," it added.

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