

Artistes entertain anti-Lynas supporters ahead of rally
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Local musicians tonight joined hands to pull off an impromptu performance by the beach at Teluk Cempedak in solidarity with anti-Lynas supporters.

Anti-Lynas supporters who had descended on the famous beach were initially scattered and confused as the venue clashed with a 1Malaysia karaoke event organised by the Kuantan local council (MPK).

However, supporters quickly coalesced when the artistes began to perform about 50m away, which also attracted bystanders that quickly swelled to close to 300 people.

Addressing the crowd, lyricist Al Kuan said he was touched by the show of solidarity by Malaysians in the struggle against the Lynas rare earth processing plant, which has received approval for a temporary operating licence (TOL) and aims to begin operations in June.

"When bad things happen to us, we would often complain. But if this (plant) did not happen, we would not have known that so many people cared for the community here," he said, before leading the crowd to chants of "Stop Lynas".

The gathering tonight was in advance of a major rally tomorrow where thousands are expected to converge at the MPK4 field in downtown Kuantan to protest the RM700 million Lynas plant in Gebeng, an industrial zone about 10km away.

Among other figures from the entertainment industry present were local singer Yu Hang, independent film director Ho YuHang and several other local musicians.

The group led the festival-like crowd in a sing-along of several popular Chinese and Malay songs such as 'Rasa Sayang' and English songs such as 'Take Me Home, Country Road'.

'We are not lab rats'

Meanwhile, a small group of activists unfurled an anti-Lynas banner as they marched along the beach before joining up with the performers.

The banner in Chinese read: "All sufferings are a result of greed, this greed will cost the nation and people and will last for generations."

An activist later led the group to chant: "We are not lab rats, we do not want to die by radiation", inviting some giggles in the crowd who nonetheless followed suit.

The crowd sang the national anthem and were treated to several more sing-alongs of popular tunes before they dispersed two hours later.

According to the New York Times, the rare earth processing facility, dubbed Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (Lamp), is believed to be the first to be built outside China in almost three decades.

Activists are concerned the plant's Leach Water Purification waste containment, which contains thorium and uranium, may leak and expose the local community to a gradual but accumulative radiation exposure.

Anwar pulls off surprise walkabout

At 11.15pm, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim made a surprise appearance at the venue to greet

anti-Lynas activists and visitors alike, as his entourage shouted "Reformasi" and "Down with Lynas".

Curious visitors followed Anwar as he performed a walkabout a la BN leaders-style, while supporters cheered him on.

Anwar shook hands with those present before briefly addressing the crowd. He had earlier been introduced as 'the future prime minister' by PKR supporters with him.

"Tomorrow, you must stand up for your rights - this is your country and your land. We must ensure the security of the people.

"Everything is not about business or money, and the people's security and health cannot be taken for granted," he said.

He called on everyone to stand in solidarity with the residents of Kuantan against Lynas and to oppose the "arrogance of power".

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