

Stop The Lynas Rare Earth Plant
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Robert Phang, chairman of Social Care Foundation, has urged the government to heed to the people's wishes by turning down the construction of a rare earth plant in Malaysia by the Australian company Lynas Corporation Ltd to give the people the peace of mind.

He said the government should also withdraw the temporary operating license issued to Lynas to completely allay the people's worries over the Lynas refinery.

Commenting on the nationwide objection against the Lynas rare earth project, Phang said the people had given a very clear message that they do not want the Lynas project as rare earth endangers their health, and definitely will deteriorate the overall environmental situation.

He stressed that the opposition towards Lynas was justified and reflected the people's wishes. Hence, Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak should carefully weigh the serious implications of going against the people's wishes.

He said that the odds would be against Barisan Nasional if the government failed to heed to the wishes of the people coupled with the fact that BN was expected to face severe challenges in the next general election.

Phang, who is also an executive council member of the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation and a former member of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission' (MACC) Consultation and Corruption Prevention Panel, said "If the government approves the Lynas facility at all risks, it will inevitably arouse suspicion of corruption in the project."

He pointed out that Australia had turned down the request by the Malaysian authority to ship the rare earth waste back to Australia for disposal. This, he said also showed that the Australians were wary of the obvious danger posed by rare earth.

"If the rare earth processed by Lynas is not toxic, it would require a different method of disposal. But toxicity is a subjective matter and should not be taken lightly.

"Australia is many time larger than Malaysia but how come it does not allow such a facility on its land ? The reason is very obvious. As such Malaysia should not and cannot allow itself to be used by Australia as a toxic rare earth dumping ground."

Phang said Malaysians would certainly reach a consensus to strongly oppose the Lynas plant in Malaysia. A people-centred government would not pursue its interest at the expense of the people's health.

He said the strong objection expressed by Malaysians nationwide should not be overlooked and the government should listen to the people by putting an end to the controversy before the emergence of another "Reformasi" campaign.

He said Green 2.0 had sent a very clear and strong message and the government should not invite popular anger (by allowing the Lynas facility).

"Our Prime Minister used to say that we must change or be changed. Such a situation may materialise and we should be mindful of that," he added

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