

**Lynas Corp's Absurd Publicity Stunts**  
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Nick Curtis the CEO of Lynas Corp had expressed his interest to meet with the CM of Penang Lim Guan Eng during the latter's visit to Australia on March 23rd. Lim has politely refused to meet up with the CEO until he has discussed with the Anti-Lynas group.

Instead he has asked Nick to meet up with the Anti-lynas group snubbing that he is the wrong person, while the CM of Pahang should be the right person to meet with Nick Curtis. Undeterred, Lynas Corp in a statement to Bernama, said the invitation would be kept open and the company welcomed the opportunity to help Lim understand its investment in the rare earth plant in Gebeng, Kuantan.

But the truth is, what can the Penang CM do to alleviate the current controversy surrounding the Lynas Rare Earth Plant? Would his personal opinion or intervention buy over the thousands of critics who are against the existence of the Rare Earth Plant in Pahang State? Isn't it more appropriate to meet with Anwar Ibrahim, the leader of the Opposition Front who is against the controversial project based on allegations that the Australian miner has not given enough assurances on how it will handle the low-level radioactive waste that will be produced at the refinery?

Really, it would make more sense for the Lynas CEO to meet with the anti-Lynas group than the CM of Penang, as Penang has no say or jurisdiction towards the project in Pahang State.

The fact that AELB approved a TOL for Lynas to operate, even when a storage facility was yet to be unidentified has come as a shock to the people. Four government Ministries has been roped in to help Lynas find a suitable storage site in the country is not only amusing but downright deploring. The statement by the Trade and Industry Minister that the radio active wastes will be disposed of overseas, even though it may break international laws is really not very assuring.

Talk of the low level radio active wastes to be dumped into the Sungei Lembing mines has only served to infuriate the people even more.

Although I am sure most Malaysians would like to give Lynas the benefit of the doubt, Lynas Corp has failed miserably to convince Malaysians that the largest Rare Earth Plant being built in Pahang would be a boon instead of a bane.

It has also sounded like the 'death knell' for tourism in the East Coast States famed for its long unspoilt sun drenched beaches.

Today, the Lynas plant is like a dark cloud hanging over Kuantan City and its inhabitants wallowing in despair at their unlucky and unforeseen future.

Properties prices have plummeted as alleged by the Kuantanese themselves and have agitated the city folks.

There is even loose talk in certain circles, that should there be a remote possibility of a terrorist attack, whether Lynas is able to handle a fall-out? Such is the extent of the fear and despair of Malaysians, especially the locals residing so near to the Rare Earth Plant, and Lynas has failed totally to address their concerns or to assure them that Lynas has the interests of the people at heart.

Besides, a 'one page' explanation on Facebook is a miserable attempt by Lynas Corp to allay the fears of the public. One would have thought that an internationally established corporation like Lynas would have a world class credible international marketing and publicity campaign, but obviously Lynas Corp is

operating on a very tight budget.

Lynas cannot continue to hide behind the Malaysian government's skirt in its operations, nor trying to insist on its statutory right to go full steam ahead with its controversial operations, unless it has the blessings of the people as their anti-Lynas stand will continue to plague the company.

All the controversy raised by former resin suppliers and engineers who reported of design flaws have served to rile Malaysian consumers into disbelieving whether the project is so safe as asserted by Lynas. It also has failed to comfort the people as to its extensive use of chemicals to process the rare earth, radon gas that will be emitted and escape into the atmosphere, and thorium that will be repacked, and stored in a zero emissions risk facility which is yet to be found?! And you expect Malaysians to be comforted every time they go to sleep at night?

It must be understood that the anti-stand is because of the people's genuine concerns that the Lynas Project would affect their livelihood, assets and their future economic wellbeing, unless Lynas can convince the people that it is operating within standard safety guidelines, the people will continue to oppose it.

It will not be prudent of Lynas to go against the wind, taking a stubborn stand and insisting their right to operate without taking into account first, the plight of the people who are fearful of the dark shadow that Lynas has loomed over them.

The time is past to talk about the technical aspects of the Lynas Processing Plant as the facts has been bared open on the internet for all to see and to those who want to do their research. What is most important now is for Lynas to come clean and smooth over all the objections and obstacles, reassuring the public that the Lynas Advanced Materials Plant is a totally fail-safe, zero risk facility that will benefit the locals in the long run, failing which they should pack their bags and leave town for good.

Already anti-Lynas groups have asked Singapore to refuse shipment of Rare earth bound for Kuantan Port and if these is unresolved the demonstrations will continue, and sooner or later someone will get hurt.

Already, the controversy has proven to be a major embarrassment to the current government, and would be a factor in the coming polls.

If Lynas Corp continues to maintain that waste from its planned rare earth refinery in Gebeng will be non hazardous, that our air will not be polluted and that the radioactive residue can be recycled for "commercial applications", isn't it time for Lynas to come out of its shell and start assuring the public with a mass publicity blitz and educational advertisements in front pages of the main stream media and television instead of trying to do a ' lame publicity stunt' to meet with an Opposition Leader who has no ties whatsoever to the Rare Earth Industry?!!!

And now as Lynas Corp continues to meet its timeline to open sometime in June, with its shares rebounding by 0.6 percent it would be interesting to know what the future will hold for Malaysians and for Lynas Corp?!!

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(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)

