

# PM: We can't cast out Lynas

## 'Rare earth plant has created high-quality job opportunities'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Rare earth producer Lynas Corp cannot be treated as an outcast as it is a necessary investment that has created many quality jobs for the country, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said Lynas was invited to invest in Malaysia as it brought in investment and created many job opportunities.

He said the government had also sent scientists to examine the operations of the plant in Gebeng, Pahang, and found there was no danger.

"But the people who are against Lynas still want to get rid of Lynas. It is a big investment - RM1.7bil.

"It created 700 jobs, high quality

paying jobs. It is necessary for our investment.

"If you treat Lynas like a pariah, and ask them to leave this country, we will not get other people to come to this country to invest," he said on the sidelines of the World Tourism Conference here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also denied claims by the anti-Lynas group which speculated that the Cabinet's decision to renew Lynas's operating licence for another six months was due to his close relationship with the Japanese government.

"It has nothing to do with Japan," said the premier.

On Aug 18, anti-Lynas protesters showed up at Taman Gelora in Kuantan to protest the Cabinet's decision to renew the rare earth producer's operating licence.

In June, Lynas signed a 10-year

loan extension on easier terms with its long-term Japanese backer, which would increase its commitment to supply rare earths to Japanese consumers.

The extension to 2030 to repay US\$147mil will help Lynas follow through on its 2025 expansion plans.

Meanwhile, Malaysia is studying another offer of a samurai bond from Japan.

Separately, Dr Mahathir brushed off claims that Pakatan Harapan would break apart due to internal squabbling.

He also denied claims that he was "alone" in his leadership, given widespread chatter that PKR leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and DAP stalwart Lim Kit Siang were actively undermining his leadership.

"You can see whether I am walking alone or not. I am walking

everywhere, and everywhere I go, people come to shake hands and express their support.

"But even in the party, you can see that this Cabinet has stayed together and has been able to make decisions, even on critical issues," said Dr Mahathir when asked to comment on Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's remark that Pakatan would break apart from "political gangrene" due to squabbling.

Ahmad Zahid said the coalition was dying a slow death due to internal as well as intra-party power struggles.

The Umno chief believes that Pakatan would fall in the next general election as people had become unhappy with the coalition for failing to fulfil its election promises and address economic woes.