

**Science minister to hear appeal against Lynas licence**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 — The science, technology and innovation minister will hear the appeal made by Save Malaysia Stop Lynas chairman Tan Boon Teet and five others to review the rare earth plant in Gebeng.

The appeal to review the decision by the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) to grant Australian miner Lynas a temporary operating licence (TOL) was made under section 32 of the Atomic Energy Licensing Act.

AELB is supervised by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

The six were told today of the hearing date, according to a statement by the ministry headed by Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili (picture).

Last Tuesday, a high-profile suit filed by 10 Pahang residents against AELB hit a roadblock after the Attorney-General's Chambers raised a preliminary objection against the challenge.

The A-G's Chambers argued on behalf of the nuclear regulator that the residents had yet to exhaust all avenues for recourse, which included appealing to Ongkili.

It is understood that Lynas' lawyers also made the same objection.

Several thousand anti-Lynas protestors thronged an opposition-backed rally led by Himpunan Hijau two weekends ago in the single largest protest yet against the rare earth refinery, which is expected to fire up operations later this year.

Critics of the refinery want government to halt its construction and direct AELB to reverse its decision to grant Lynas a TOL, which will let it embark on a two-year trial run.

They alleged that the Australian miner has not given sufficient assurances on how it will handle the low-level radioactive waste that will be produced at the plant in Gebeng, Kuantan.

Putrajaya has been under pressure from anti-Lynas groups to shut down the rare earth project over safety concerns. But the government has stood its ground on the project that was first earmarked for Terengganu.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai told the Sin Chew Daily this week Lynas will have to send the waste produced at Gebeng back to Australia, even though the Western Australian government has said it will not accept any residue from ore mined from Mount Weld in the state.

But critics have charged that Malaysia risks breaching international laws if it ships Lynas Corp's rare earth waste out of the country.

The Sydney-based company maintains that waste from its rare earth refinery will not be harmful and can be recycled for "commercial applications".

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