

Meet with Kuantan residents first, Guan Eng tells Lynas
The Malaysian Insider
March 22, 2012
By Yow Hong Chieh

KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 — Lim Guan Eng says he will not meet with Lynas Corp until the Australian miner engages with Kuantan residents over its rare earths plant on the outskirts of the city.

The Penang chief minister pointed out it was not “relevant” for Lynas to meet with him instead of those living near the controversial refinery and urged the engagement with affected residents.

“I believe the questions above need to be answered before any discussions can take place. More importantly, you should answer these questions directly to the affected residents.

“Being from Australia, you will indeed appreciate that the process of public consultation is part and parcel of a democracy,” Lim (picture) said in a statement to Lynas executive chairman Nick Curtis.

On March 5, Curtis expressed interest in briefing Lim about the project in person but was rebuffed by the latter, who said he was not a direct stakeholder in the issue.

Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, said that in the spirit of democracy Lynas should declare it will not proceed with the plant if it cannot satisfy the concerns of Kuantan residents.

Thousands of anti-Lynas protestors attended an opposition-backed rally by Himpunan Hijau last month Kuantan, the largest protest yet against the plant which is expected to fire up later this year.

Critics allege that Lynas Corp has failed to give enough assurances on how it will handle the low-level radioactive waste that will be produced at the plant, some 25km from Kuantan city centre.

But the Australian miner maintains that waste from the Gebeng plant will not be hazardous and can be easily recycled for commercial applications.

Parliament approved a select committee on Lynas on Tuesday amid opposition furore over its terms of reference and suspicion that the nine-man panel will be used to “whitewash” the issue.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers also questioned the point of the select committee given that the prime minister has already said the government will not be bound by the panel’s findings.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/meet-with-kuantan-residents-first-guan-eng-tells-lynas/>