

**Guan Eng: PM must halt Lynas plant construction**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 23 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak should immediately halt the construction of the Lynas refinery in Gebeng to prove his commitment to public safety, Lim Guan Eng said today.

Penang Chief Minister Lim accused the prime minister of contradicting himself during an interview with radio station 988FM yesterday, where Najib had said he would scrap the Lynas plant construction if there was scientific evidence to prove it was hazardous.

This, according to Lim (picture), was different from what Najib had said last week — that the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on the Lynas rare earths plant could not decide on whether the refinery would be built.

“Datuk Seri Najib Razak should publicly withdraw his March 17 remarks, order an immediate stop-work order on Lynas and declare the Barisan Nasional’s government willingness to pay compensation of at least RM700 million which Lynas spent on building the plant,” Lim said in a statement.

Putrajaya announced that it would set up the PSC on the Lynas plant in Kuantan, which has stoked fears of radiation pollution.

The committee was approved in the Dewan Rakyat this week amid opposition furore over the alleged lack of terms of reference and suspicion that the nine-man panel would be used to “whitewash” the issue.

PR lawmakers also questioned the point of the select committee given that Najib had already said the government will not be bound by the panel’s findings.

They subsequently announced a boycott of the panel, saying it has no power to decide the fate of the RM2.3 billion project.

“For Datuk Seri Najib to change his tune to say that the PSC was a ‘strong basis for us to make a decision’ on Lynas is a flip-flop from his March 17 remarks.

“Clearly this change is the result of PR’s boycott of the PSC. However such a flip-flop only raises more questions whether the prime minister is serious and sincere about following through on closing down Lynas in the face of evidence and proof of environmental damage and threats to public health and safety,” Lim added.

The decision to set up the panel came after months of fierce opposition to the project from PR, civil society groups and the public.

Thousands of anti-Lynas protestors attended an opposition-backed rally by Himpunan Hijau last month in the largest protest yet against the refinery, 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, 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.

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