

## **Anti-Lynas activists quit MOSTI appeal, focus on legal case**

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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 — Three out of six petitioners against Lynas Corp's temporary licence for its rare earth refinery have withdrawn from an April 17 ministerial hearing on the issue to focus on today's judicial review over the plant's licence.

Save Malaysia Stop Lynas (SMSL) chairman Tan Bun Teet confirmed that he and two others will not appear before Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili at the Malaysian Nuclear Agency in Bangi next Tuesday to argue against granting of a Temporary Operating Licence (TOL) for the Lynas rare earth plant in Gebeng, Kuantan.

"One group will appear before the minister for the hearing to review the TOL, while the other group has withdrawn from appearing to prepare for judicial review," Tan told The Malaysian Insider.

Tan clarified that they have not initiated any legal proceedings and that a judicial review case today involves a separate group, the Stop Lynas Coalition (SLC).

Tan said that all the petitioners in the appeal before Ongkili are Kuantan residents.

Ismail Abu Bakar, the vice-chairman of SMSL and also a petitioner, will be leading the group in the appeal hearing.

Kuantan is within 25 kilometres of Gebeng — the site of the controversial Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP).

Tan also said that the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) "has not provided us their grounds to award the TOL."

He maintained that the law requires AELB to provide the grounds for issuing the TOL "seven days before the hearing", which in this case is April 10.

Tan added that they have yet to receive any indication from AELB that the document has been sent out.

AELB's director general Datuk Raja Abdul Aziz Raja Adnan disputed such claims yesterday, insisting that "we have already sent it out last month through the proper legal channels (including registered post)."

He also asked if the petitioners have been communicating with their lawyers.

In January, the AELB approved a TOL for the Lynas plant but has said it will not issue the permit until the Australian miner complies with extra safety conditions imposed.

The AELB also said last week it will not issue a TOL to Lynas Corp until the outstanding appeal to the science, technology and innovation minister has been completed.

Last Tuesday, Lynas Corp's Malaysian subsidiary said the plant would be ready to fire up operations in three weeks' time.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court will decide this afternoon if a court case involving the SLC application to review the granting of the TOL will go on.

This Friday, an umbrella group of 22 non-governmental organisations called Solidariti SeMalaysia Himpunan Hijau will stage nationwide anti-Lynas protests at mosques across the country.

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.

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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