

**PM: Putrajaya must 'convince' residents of Lynas safety**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, June 12 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak said today that Putrajaya has yet to decide on Lynas Corporation's controversial rare earth refinery in Kuantan, a RM2.5 billion project which has been the subject of fierce protests by residents in the prime minister's home state.

He told Malaysians during a live Internet chat session this afternoon that the government first wants to be "fully satisfied" that residents are "convinced" of the plant's safety before making its decision.

"We have to go through the process of convincing the people that the plant will be safe.

"The government has not made a final decision yet and will not do so until we are fully satisfied and that the people will [not] feel that anything untoward will happen to them including in the long term," he said on NST Live.

Najib (picture) was responding to a question from netizen "Salman" who had asked if the government had decided on the Lynas plant, pointing out that minister Datuk Seri Maximus Ongkili had said three weeks ago that an answer would be given in two weeks.

On May 22, the science, technology and innovation minister was reported as saying by Bernama Online that the appeal against the Lynas Advanced Materials Plant's (LAMP) temporary operating licence (TOL) by three individuals would be decided on in two weeks' time.

The minister had also said that there was no need to wait for the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) on LAMP to conclude its findings before deciding on the matter.

The PSC's tenure ends this July 18.

Three individuals — Ismail Abu Bakar, Tan Ah Meng and Abujavalli V. Raman — have appealed against the Atomic Energy Licensing Board's (AELB) decision on January 30 to approve the Lynas TOL, claiming it would emit high levels of radioactive pollution that would endanger the lives of those living near the plant in the Gebeng Industrial Estate, Kuantan.

Lynas had said last month that it was on track to start up its rare earth plant in Malaysia next month after Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin, chairman of the PSC on the refinery that has raised fears of radiation pollution, called it "the safest rare earth plant in the world."

It also said in April that delays in obtaining the licence for its facility, which was initially approved in January, may have "very serious consequences" for RM80 billion worth of rare earth orders as it is "sold out for the next 10 years."

The Lynas PSC was approved by the Dewan Rakyat during the March sitting amid opposition furore over the alleged lack of terms of reference and suspicion that the nine-man panel will be used to "whitewash" the issue.

Pakatan Rakyat lawmakers have also questioned the point of the select committee given

that Najib had earlier already said that the government will not be bound by the panel's findings.

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