

Lynas: Govt to stick to what reported by experts - Dr Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said that the government will stand firm on Lynas' license renewal issue, saying that it will go according to the views of the experts and scientists who understand about the danger of radioactive waste.

The Prime Minister said the government cannot always listen to popular views especially when it involved a small group of people making use of the alternative media to promote their ideas to the extent of giving the hammering to anyone who goes against them.

“Now I want to stick to what was reported by the experts. If it's a very dangerous material, then we will, of course, solve it. But the report says that it is not dangerous...that the waste is put in just one place.

“Maybe there is a big concentration...we are ready to disperse it but we cannot export because nobody wants to accept it, and we cannot throw it into the sea either because the fish will die. If it's true, we want to go according to the expert' s view,” he said after officiating the 62nd International Statistical Institute (ISI) World Statistics Congress (WSC) at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here today.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the claim by certain quarters that the day the nod or green light was given to Lynas license renewal was a shameful day for Malaysia.

On Aug 15, the Atomic Energy Licensing Board announced that the operating licence for the rare earth processing plant owned by Australian miner Lynas Corp had been renewed by six months. The operating licence of Lynas was earlier extended for three years from 2016 to Sept 2 this year.

However, the renewal of the licence this time came with several major conditions, which include the transfer of its cracking and leaching process to another country and the construction of a permanent disposal facility.

Lynas is also required to terminate all research and development activities on water leach purification radioactive residue as condisoil for agriculture.

Prime Minister further explained that it was hard for the government to decide on the issue after experts confirmed that there was no danger.

“People's popular view is one thing, the expert's view is another. Do you go according to the popular view or do you go according to the expert? If u go according to the popular view, there is nothing you can do, because every time we propose to do something, there will be some people who are against it,” he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the government have a choice to make, either to get rid of the industry and lose credibility in term of dealing with foreign direct investment, or go ahead and take care of what is considered to be a problem.

“We can take care of that problem. There is no problem. Actually, in the Cabinet (meeting), we have already discussed this,” he said.

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