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# Why we can't ask Lynas to go: PM

► 'Foreign investors are watching govt's action on the rare earth miner'

**FUKUOKA:** Malaysia cannot force Lynas Corp to leave Malaysia after having invited the Australian rare earth minerals mining company to invest in the country, just because some people do not want to accept the expert studies, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The prime minister said Lynas had invested more than RM1 billion on its operations in Malaysia but the processing of the rare earth minerals is said to produce radioactive waste.

Expert studies indicate that it is "a very low-level" radioactive waste and not hazardous to health, he said, adding that he believed there is a way to further reduce the low-level radioactivity.

"We invite them (to invest) and then we kick them out. Others will say the country made a promise but,

when there is a problem we kick them out ... we cannot do that," he told Malaysian reporters when concluding his two-day visit to Fukuoka yesterday.

Mahathir said foreign investors were watching the government's action on Lynas.

"If we chase out Lynas, the others (foreign investors) will not come (to Malaysia). Because there are some (investors) whom we do not like ... we ask them (investors) to leave. Who (investors) would want to come, they must have certainty," he said.

Mahathir said if the radioactive waste was dangerous, the workers in Lynas Malaysia - about 600 local engineers - would have fallen sick.

"The report was made by experts but there are quarters who do not accept the experts' decision. This poses a problem if we ask the experts to make the study, but we reject it. What is the purpose of asking the experts to make the study?" he said.

In addition to losing the investment, 600 local workers would also lose their jobs if Lynas were to be closed, he said.

"The 600 workers there are our people, they are not afraid, they ask (the operations) to be continued," he said. - Bernama