

# Prof Lawrence: Let experts handle Lynas issue

**JOHOR BARU:** A different approach should be undertaken in order to achieve a solution for the Lynas rare earth plant dispute, said Prof Lawrence E. Susskind, who is a Ford Professor of Urban and Environmental Planning department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

He said that he was optimistic that a consensus could be reached if the matter was mediated by an independent panel made up of environmental and tactical experts.

"These experts should be aware of the current situation and should be acceptable by all parties involved," he said at a press conference at Thistle Hotel here yesterday.

Susskind however, said that it (the solution) would not happen unless everybody was willing to be open to suggestions from the independent panel.

"This is why I suggested that a different approach to be taken where the goal is to search not for a compromise, but for a solution that meets the most interests of all parties.



**Voicing his views:** Kicker: Prof Lawrence speaking during the press conference while Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) chancellor Raja Zarith looks on.

"I am absolutely sure that with the right neutral and competent experts, a productive solution can be found," said Susskind.

Susskind added that an independent panel should step in and meet

with the conflicting parties.

"The panel should not be biased but should make an independent suggestion after considering the information from the respective sides.

"The mediators should then take

different parts of the problem and look at it in a different way and come up with constructive solutions where nobody is forced to accept anything, until a consensus is reached," he said.

Susskind, who is also vice chair for the Programme On Negotiation at Harvard Law School, has been teaching in MIT for 35 years.

He has vast experience in mediating more than 50 disputes including land-use conflicts, public policies disagreements, issues of water and facility sitting controversies in the United States and the Middle East.

He was in Malaysia as part of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)'s Premium Lecture Series where Susskind shared his experiences and insights on the current scenario in Malaysia called New Tools for Democratic Decision Making.

UTM chancellor Raja Zarith Sofiah Almarhum Sultan Idris Shah, who is the Sultan of Johor's royal consort, was also present during the press conference.