

14/01/1999

40,000 teachers disgruntled with rest day directive

P. Chandra Sagar

IPOH, Wed. - About 40,000 teachers in Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Terengganu are unhappy with the Education Ministry's directive asking them to work on the first Thursday of every month while other civil servants will enjoy the once-a-month extra day off.

Congress of Teachers' Union in Education Service secretary-general Shahul Hamid Mydin Shah said today the directive had defeated the Government's objective of fostering closer family ties and promote social development through a caring society.

He said children in those States would be in school while their parents were having the extra day off.

The directive, dated Dec 29, was signed by the director-general of Education, Datuk Dr Abdul Shukor Abdullah.

Government servants in the four States observe Thursday as a half-day working day and Friday as a holiday while schools get Friday and Saturday as holidays.

However, Terengganu it is learnt, has opted for Saturday of every month as the extra day off for civil servants so that parents and their children can enjoy the day together.

Shahul Hamid said teachers felt that they had been given a raw deal and complained to the Congress since others would enjoy the extra day off while they work.

The proposal for an additional day off for civil servants was made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in his 1999 Budget presentation last year.

For States which observe Sunday as a rest day, the first Saturday of every month will be an extra day off, while those who observe Friday as a holiday, the extra day off will be the first Thursday of each month.

The extra day off ruling came into effect early this month. However, teachers in these States had to go to school on Jan 7 which was the first Thursday when civil servants in other States had a long weekend of three days.

The Government decided to give the extra day to civil servants to enable parents to spend more time with their children in line with the caring society concept and also to boost domestic tourism.

Shahul Hamid also urged the Public Service Department and the Ministry of Education find an amicable solution.

Congress president Muhammad Mustapha is expected to meet Abdul Shukor to discuss the problem.

(END)