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Ministry to act if Nube's action is against charter

Hamisah Hamid

THE Human Resources Ministry will intervene in the expulsion threat faced by National Union of Bank Employees (Nube) members if the executive council's (exco) action proves to be against the union's constitution.

Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said the ministry "will honour" the exco's decision if it complies with legal procedure.

"However, if it is against the union's constitution, we will have to investigate," he told a news conference after chairing the ministry's weekly post-Cabinet meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Fong was asked to comment on the decision made by the Nube exco on Monday that members who do not pay the 10 per cent levy on their salary arrears (during a three-month period) risked losing their membership.

The levy is opposed by nearly half of the 27,000-strong Nube as they allege that it will be used to help the union recoup its share market losses.

The union lost RM23.2 million in contra deals in 1999.

Last week, a group of dissatisfied Nube members had asked Trade Union Department director-general Izhar Harun to nullify a secret ballot which approved the levy.

They claimed that there were irregularities in the balloting and that the majority of members did not vote.

Fong said the Trade Union Department will conclude its investigation into the matter within the next two or three days.

"It is a straightforward investigation. If we find that the Nube exco's action is according to the constitution, we will honour it.

"If not, it'll be otherwise," he said.

On another development, Fong advised the Malaysian Trades Union Council (MTUC) to discuss with the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) their dissatisfaction and allegations.

"The Government has explained to the MTUC. We hope that the MTUC can have a heart-to-heart talk with the EPF to iron out all the differences.

"No need to escalate the situation," he said when asked to comment on the MTUC's recent revelation to the media about businessmen asking the EPF to bail out their ailing firms.

It is understood that the meeting is being organised following the move by the MTUC to defer the nationwide picket on May 12 to August 3 after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad gave an undertaking in a letter to the MTUC to shelve the annuity insurance scheme until the completion of a study conducted by consultants engaged by the EPF.

The MTUC, in its seven-point claim, wants the scheme to be reviewed as it is dissatisfied with the benefits offered to the EPF contributors.

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