

21 OCT 2001

Sarawak-Employment

MTUC TO SEEK PM'S HELP TO EXTEND EMPLOYMENT ACT TO SARAWAK

KUCHING, Oct 21 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) has decided to seek Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's assistance to get the Employment Act extended to Sarawak.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said the extension was long overdue and he would write to the Prime Minister in an effort to speed up the matter.

"The letter will be ready tomorrow. I will give the letter to Dr Mahathir in view of the urgency to more than 100,000 workers in Sarawak," he told reporters after opening Sarawak MTUC's 1st Triennial Delegates Conference today.

Zainal said discussions on extending the act to Sarawak between the Sarawak and federal governments had been dragging on for five years.

"We are baffled as to what is the actual cause for the delay. Workers in the state are anxious and they keep asking me, how long are they going to wait -- a week, month or another year," he said.

Zainal said MTUC would not keep quiet on the matter as long as the state government did not give any help in safeguarding the rights of workers in Sarawak.

"What is the act for if it's not for protecting the people..The longer the delay, workers will lose out," he said.

Zainal said one strong point of the act was that it protected workers laid off by employers.

He, however, said MTUC had so far not received any reports on workers being retrenched by the private sector in Sarawak.

Meanwhile, Zainal called on the government to review the move to raise petrol and diesel prices by 10 sen per litre as there was a similar hike only 14 months ago.

He said the increase in fuel prices would burden consumers in rural areas, especially farmers who used petrol to run their farming machines, generator sets for electricity and outboard engines to move from one place to another.

-- BERNAMA

FLL MT SK