

New courses for retraining the retrenched

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Marketing, management to be taught

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. The Human Resources Ministry will add new courses to its re-training scheme for retrenched and unemployed workers.

Among the courses are marketing and management techniques which can equip workers with marketable skills, Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said.

"We have discussed with employers what the relevant courses are and they have indicated their acceptance," he said.

He said the new courses would help ensure that there was no mismatch between retrenched workers and available jobs.

"Most vacancies are in the estate and services sectors but retrenchments mainly occur in construction."

Fong said the current ratio of job vacancies for every worker was 3:1.

On the deadlock between the Malaysian Agricultural Producers Association and the National Union of Plantation Workers over a minimum wage for rubber tappers, Fong said he would give them two weeks to reach an agreement.

Failing that, he would refer the matter to the Industrial Court, he told reporters after his ministry's post-Cabinet meeting.

The latest round of talks on Monday reached a stalemate after the NUPW rejected Mapa's offer of a RM300 wage ceiling.

NUPW executive director A. Na-

vamukundan had described the quantum as "unacceptable".

This is the second time Fong has thrown the parties a deadline and threatened court action.

"After a long time, Mapa has finally agreed in principle to a minimum wage, and I consider this a breakthrough. But they have failed to agree on the quantum."

He also announced that the Labour Day Assembly would be held at the Melawati Stadium, Shah Alam, on May 4. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is to launch the event.

On the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's installation tomorrow, Fong reminded employers that it was a public holiday and they should give their workers a day off or pay them accordingly as required by law.