

24 APR 2002

Fong-Wages

ANOTHER TWO WEEKS FOR MAPA AND NUPW TO RESOLVE MINIMUM WAGES

PUTRAJAYA, April 24 (Bernama) -- Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn today gave the Malayan Agricultural Producers Association (Mapa) and the National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) another two weeks to resolve the issue of monthly minimum wages for rubber estate workers.

He said the ministry would also meet both parties again to discuss the matter.

"They have agreed in principle to a guaranteed monthly minimum wage, but both sides failed to agree on the amount," he told reporters at his office, here.

Dr Fong was asked to comment on the failure of both parties to reach an agreement after their meeting last Monday.

It was reported that at the meeting the NUPW disagreed with the RM300 minimum wage proposed by Mapa, which it regarded as not enough.

Last month, it was reported that Dr Fong had given both parties two weeks to solve the issue or settle it in the Industrial Court.

However, when asked today whether the ministry would refer the matter to the Industrial Court if both parties were still unable to agree after the two weeks, he said it would be better if the ministry tried to solve it first.

He also said that the ministry would organise a Workers Day rally at Stadium Melawati, Shah Alam, on May 4.

The rally was expected to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Fong also reminded employers to give paid leave to their workers tomorrow which has been declared a public holiday to mark the installation of the 12th Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"If they have to work they should be paid double the normal rates and if there are extenuating circumstances, employers can ask their workers to work at normal rates but the holiday must be replaced with another day," he said.

Meanwhile, in a statement faxed to Bernama, here, Dr Fong said the public holiday was in addition to the annual public holidays fixed by employers as required by the Employment Act 1955.

He said that under the Act, an employer who did not give paid leave to his employees on April 25 or did not replace it with another day's leave was committing an offence and could be fined up to RM10,000 for each offence.

-- BERNAMA

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