

09/11/2002

Bank employees to picket on Nov 21

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Some 30,000 bank employees will stage a nationwide picket on Nov 21 to protest against banks' unilateral withdrawal of subscription deduction facility to the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE).

The decision to stage the picket was decided at the Malaysian Trades Union Congress special executive committee meeting held at MTUC headquarters in Subang Jaya today.

The two-hour meeting, which began at 5.30pm and was chaired by congress deputy president Mohd Shafiee B.P. Mammal, was attended by 30 MTUC executive committee members.

The meeting was also attended by MTUC secretary-general G. Rajasekaran and the three vice-presidents.

Rajasekaran said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also Finance Minister, would be informed of the picket besides Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn.

The meeting, he added, was convened to decide on the date of the picket as the executive committee thought that banks' unilateral withdrawal of subscription deduction facility was a conspiracy between Malaysian Commercial Banks Association (MCBA) and banks to destroy NUBE.

"This concerted action coming just months away from the impending negotiations with NUBE on new terms and conditions is well-planned to deny the 30,000 bank employees any wage increase," he added.

Prior to the picket, MTUC has planned a series of action to highlight the "unhealthy tactics" adopted by major banks.

Rajasekaran said all MTUC affiliates had decided to ask chief executive officers of all banks to restore the union subscription deduction facility.

"NUBE and MTUC affiliates will distribute 10,000 pamphlets to banks' customers to expose banks' union-busting tactics and the nine banks which took the lead under the banner of MCBA will be targeted for criticism," he added.

He said MTUC was determined to ensure that these "dirty tactics" did not pollute the entire industrial relations system and create industrial unrest.

Bernama, meanwhile, quoted Fong as saying that MTUC should not stage a nationwide picket to protest against MCBA's alleged union-busting activities.

He said it was important for the banking industry to maintain industrial harmony, particularly at a time when it was facing a lot of challenges, like bank mergers and consolidation exercise.

"This issue should be solved through discussion. My advice to MTUC is that it is not necessary to picket.

"It is best to have discussions with the employers," he said after a ground-breaking ceremony for the SJKC Liat Choon new building in Jeram, Kuala Selangor.

Meanwhile, MTUC today also discussed the Johor Textile Workers Union's report on anti-union activities by Ramatex Textile Industry in Johor.

Rajasekaran said despite a directive by Fong, Ramatex had refused to recognise the union.

As a result, he said, the dispute remain unresolved for more than two years.

"Since the workers joined the union in March 2000, the company suspended 120 employees and dismissed another 30," he added.