

Talks to resolve dissatisfaction over proposed amendments to Act

PETALING JAYA: The Human Resources Ministry is in discussion with trade movements and employers to resolve dissatisfaction over proposed amendments to the Employment Act.

The Bill, which was tabled for the second reading in Parliament, was pulled back last month for fine-tuning and further changes. It was first tabled on July 8.

Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam

said the Bill would likely be re-tabled during the next Parliament session next year.

"Discussions are ongoing. Both sides (trade movements and employers) said the Bill had failed the other side. We are gathering view points from all relevant parties before making the changes.

"What is important is that the Bill must be fair to workers and employers and provide adequate protection

for employees," he said yesterday.

Among the amendments are an addition of a section on sexual harassment, protecting the rights of pregnant women and domestic servants.

However, other amendments have been criticised by various groups including the MTUC, Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) and Oppressed People's Network (Jerit) who claim that it favours employers more than the employees.

MTUC president Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud said the ongoing discussions were on the proposed amendments to the Industrial Relations Act 1967 and certain provisions in the Employment Act.

"We are in no hurry to push for the amendments to be tabled in Parliament as it is less than satisfactory. Our priority is on protecting employees and their rights," he added. Employers too were unhappy with

certain conditions including the fact that they were required to conduct an inquiry about sexual harassment complaints in a manner prescribed by the minister while many already had their own codes of inquiry.

However, Malaysian Employers Federation secretary Datuk Thavalingam Thavarajah said that employers would act against sexual harassment with or without legislation.