

Cancel Parliament protest, MEF tells MTUC

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Subramaniam will chair an emergency meeting of the NLAC tomorrow. — File pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 — The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged the Malaysian Trade Unions Congress (MTUC) to call off plans to picket outside Parliament tomorrow, calling the response to controversial changes in employment laws premature and “unreasonable”.

It said MTUC should instead let the government explain proposed amendments to the Employment Act 1955 as the Human Resources Ministry had already called for an emergency meeting of the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC) tomorrow.

The NLAC comprises representatives from the government, employers and employees.

“MEF is of the view that MTUC’s decision to have a picket is not so reasonable,” MEF executive director Shamsuddin Bardan told *The Malaysian Insider*.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the NLAC, revived about a fortnight ago, will hold an emergency meeting chaired by Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam tomorrow.

“As the Human Resources Minister has already called an NLAC meeting, we (should) discuss first. After that, if MTUC is not satisfied, it can continue their action.”

“There are also items we don’t agree with and new items we recommended but were not included. But we accept [the differences],” Shamsuddin said, adding that the ministry had yet to consider several proposals from MEF.

The MEF has expressed support towards provisions for labour contractors, the MTUC’s main objection to the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2010.

Shamsuddin said he was against provisions to provide sexual harassment protection to all categories of workers when the Employment Act only covered those who earned RM1,500 or less.

He added that the MEF’s suggestion to create a “time bank” to stop workers from being laid off during an economic downturn, as practised in European countries, had been rejected by the government.

“We’re not happy, but we’ve given our views,” he said when asked why MEF was not protesting like MTUC,

MTUC announced after last Sunday’s council meeting that it would hold a picket outside Parliament tomorrow, a decision that was finalised yesterday following an unproductive four-hour forum with Human Resources Ministry officials.

The umbrella group, which represents some 250 trade unions, expects to mobilise at least 1,000 members to protest the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2010 that will be tabled for a second reading in the next Parliament session.