

Compulsory day off

A must for employers and maids to sign new contract

THE STAR 17/6/09 MS16

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government has agreed to make it compulsory for employers to give a day off a week for their maids.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam said: "The ministry will make it mandatory for all domestic helpers to sign the contract of employment containing provisions like salary, the name of employers, their workplaces and the compulsory one day off a week."

The provision would be incorporated into the contract of employment to be signed by employers, maids and the agencies responsible for bringing them into the country.

He said the ministry would amend the Employment Act to incorporate the new provision.

"The Employment Act currently covers all other sectors except for maids. We are now in the process of formulating the regulation, after which we will forward it to the Attorney-General's Chambers for approval.

"We may be able to implement it this year," he told reporters after meeting unions and non-governmental organisations on the issue of foreign workers at Wisma Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB) here yesterday.

Subramaniam said it would be up to the employers to determine when the maids' day off would be.

If both the employers and workers agreed that there would not be a day off for a particular week, the maids would be paid compensation, he said.

Subramaniam also said employers of foreign



New directive out: Dr Subramaniam speaking at the meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him is Labour Department director-general Datuk Ismail Abdul Rahim.

maids would be required to register with the Labour Department as part of the measures to prevent incidents such as abuse of maids.

"We will also provide a guide book to foreign maids containing telephone numbers of embassies and relevant agencies for them to contact should they need to do so," he added.

Employers who failed to abide by the terms in the contract of employment could be fined up to RM10,000, he said.

He also said the Labour Department would be making random enforcement visits to plac-

es where foreign maids are employed to check on their welfare and to ensure that all the rules and terms of the contract are adhered to.

Female officers accompanied by male officers will be deployed and the exercise will begin immediately.

Employers wishing to hire foreign maids will also be required to furnish the Immigration Department with a contract of employment containing the terms and conditions of service relating to wage, rest day and insurance coverage.