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Tajuk : No deferment on revised increment

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No deferment on revised increment

Authorities to conduct strict enforcement on minimum wage

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KUCHING: There will be no deferment or exception for employers on the revised increment of minimum wage rate which will be implemented on July 1.

The Human Resources Ministry and the Labour Department will soon engage with employers and employees to explain the new minimum wage rate.

State Department of Labour director Datuk August Buma said it would not entertain any application from employers to defer or be exempted from paying minimum wage to employees as every employer would have to comply with the ruling.

"Our department has received instruction from the ministry to conduct strict enforcement of the new minimum wage. We have 16

enforcement officers statewide and we have issued instructions for them to do statutory inspections," he said during an interview at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

He said department did not want employees in the country especially in Sarawak to be denied of their rights as provided for under the law.

The new minimum wages for Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan will be RM920 per month.

Penalty for non-compliance is RM10,000 for every employee who are not paid or one year imprisonment.

"From the cases that we prosecuted, the magistrate court fined them RM2,500 per employee. If they fail to pay the penalty, there will be a three-month imprisonment. It's very serious and we advise employers to comply with the law," said Buma.

He encouraged employees who were not paid the minimum wage to come forward and file a complaint with the department.

He said up till now, 14 investiga-



Buma says there will be a three months imprisonment for employers who fail to pay the penalty. — Photo by AVA LAI/ The Star

tion papers on non-payment of minimal wages had been filed. Among the cases involved were two employers in the hotel industry which affected more than 100 employees.

A few weeks ago, two employers from Kuching and one employer from Miri were fined in court for not paying minimum wages and another four cases are pending in court.

"Most of the cases are from services industry involving small and medium enterprise (SME). Our focus is on SME because in these

cases we discovered the non-payment of minimum wages during the course of our normal inspections.

"When we discovered that they were not paying minimum wages, we take the case and file the charges in the magistrate court.

"Once we prosecute, the penalty is beyond our control. It's up to the magistrates at the court," said Buma.

Meanwhile, he said the department has not received any reports that employees were not allowed to go out to vote by their employ-

ers.

"Under the labour law, if employees take a reasonable time to vote and the employer deduct their wages, that is wrong. If they do, then we will take action accordingly," he said.

"They will come under the Elections' Act. Under labour ordinance, you are not supposed to stop citizens from exercising their democratic rights. If you do, then we will blacklist the employer.

"So far, there is no complain from employees regarding their rights to vote," said Buma.